AYTAPKEIA,

OR THE

ART

OF DIVINE

CONTENTMENT

BY

THOMAS WATSON Paſtour of *Stephens Walbrook*, *LOND.*

The fourth Edition.

Godlineſſe with Contentment is great gain, 1 Tim, 6. 6.

Κȣ́φως φέρειν χρὴ θνητὸν ὄντα συμφορᾶς. Eurip.
Beatus eſt qui ſuis contentus eſt. Seneca.

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THE EPISTLE To the Reader.

Christian Reader,

HAving seriously considered the great dishonours done to Almighty God (as well as the prejudice which doth accrue to our selves) by the sin of discontent, (a Catholick and Epidemical sin*;) It did at first put me upon the study of this subject. Nor is it incongruous to handle this next in order to the Christian Charter. I shewed you there the great

* In statu maximè querulo & morosò posse ti summa. Sen.

great things which a Beleever hath in reverſion, Things to come are his; *and here, behold a Chriſtians holy and gracious deportment in this life, which diſcovers it ſelfe in nothing more eminently, then in* Contentation. *Diſcontent is to the ſoul, as a diſeaſe to the body* *; *it puts it out of temper, and doth much hinder its regular and ſublime motions heaven-ward. Diſcontent is hereditary, and no doubt but it is much augmented by the many ſad eclipſes and changes that have fallen out of late in the body politick; yet the diſeaſe is not to be pleaded for, becauſe natural; but to be reſiſted becauſe ſinful. That which ſhould make us out of love with this ſullen diſtemper, is the contemplating the beautiful Queen of* Contentation *. *For my part, I know not any ornament in Religion that doth more beſpangle a Chriſtian, or glitter in the eye of God and man, then this of Contentment. Nor certainly is there any thing wherein all the Chriſtian ver-*

* *Eſt animi ægritudo.* Cic. Tuſc. 4.

* *Contraria juxta ſe poſita, &c.*

vertues do work more harmoniously, or shine more transparently, then in this Orb. Every grace doth act its part here, and help to keep the soul in its εὐκρασία; *this is the true* Philosophers *stone, which turnes all into Gold; this is the curious enamel and embroidery of the heart, which makes* Christs *Spouse* all glorious within. *How should every Christian be ambitious to wear such a sparkling Diamond! If there be a blessed life before we come at Heaven, it is the contented life.* And *why not contented?* Why art thou wrath, and why is thy countenance fallen*? *Man of all creatures hath the least cause to be discontented. Canst thou deserve any thing from God? doth he owe thee any thing? What if the scene turne, and God puts thee under the* black rod? *Whereas he useth a rod, he might use a Scorpion; he might as well damne thee, as whip thee; Why then art thou so querulous? why dost thou give way to this*

* Gen. 4. 6.

irrational and unthankful sinne of discontent: The good Lord humble his own people for nourishing such a viper in their breast, as doth not only eat out the bowels of their comfort, but spits venome in the face of God himselfe. O Christian, who art overspread with this fretting leprosie, *thou carriest the* man of sinne *about thee; for thou settest thy selfe above God; and as if thou wert wiser then he, would'st saucily prescribe him what condition is best for thee. O this* devil of discontent, *which whomsoever it possesseth, it makes his heart a little Hell*. I know there will not be perfect contentment here in this life*,* οὐκ ὅστις πάντ' ἀνὴρ εὐδαιμονεῖ. *Perfect pleasure is only* at Gods right hand*, *yet we may begin here to tune our instrument before we play the sweet lesson of Contentment exactly in heaven. I should be glad if this little piece might be like* Moses *his casting the tree into the waters*, to make the uncouth, bitter*

* ταράττειν, exinde τάρταρος.

* *Amplissimâ quâque lætitiâ subsit quæpiam vel parva querimonia* Lucius Apul Florid. l. 2.

* Ps. 16. 11

* Ex. 15. 25

bitter condition of life, more ſweet and pleaſant to drink of. I have once more adventured into the publick; this I acknowledge to be rudi Minervâ, home-ſpun; ſome better hand might have made a more curious draught: but having preached upon the ſubject, I was earneſtly ſolicited by ſome of my Hearers to publiſh it; and although it is not dreſt in that rich attire of eloquence, as it might; yet I am not about Poetry, or Oratory, but Divinity; nor is this intended for fancy, but practice. If I may herein do any ſervice, or caſt but a mite into the treaſury of the Churches grace, I have my deſire. The end of our living is to live to God, and to lift up his Name in the world*. The Lord adde an effectual bleſſing to this work, and faſten it as a naile in a ſure place; He of his mercy make it as ſpiritual Phyſick to purge the ill humour of diſcontent out of our hearts, that ſo a Crown of honour may be ſet upon the head

* Nihil turpius eſt quàm grandis natu ſenex, qui nullum aliud habet argumentum quo probet ſe diù vixiſſe præter ætatem. Seneca de Tranquil.

head of Religion, and the crystal streames of joy and peace may ever runne in our souls: which is the prayer of him who is desirous to be a faithful Orator for thee at the Throne of grace,

From my study at
Stephens Walbrook
May. 5. 1653.

THOMAS WATSON.

TO

TO THE
Chriſtian Reader,

Word ſpoken in due ſeaſon, how good is it *? As God *giveth to his creatures their meat in ſeaſon**; ſo his *faithful ſtewards provide for his houſhold their portion of meat in due ſeaſon* *. And as it is with corporal food, the ſeaſon addeth much both to the value and uſefulneſſe thereof, in like manner it is with food ſpiritual. In this regard, the brokenneſſe of theſe times (wherein the boſoms of moſt people are filled with diſquiets and their mouths with murmurings) may well render this Treatiſe the more acceptable. The ſeas are not ſo ſtormy as mens ſpirits are tempeſtuous, toſſed to and fro with diſcontents. And now the Lord (*who maketh every thing beautiful in his time* *) hath moſt opportunely put into thy hand a profitable diſcourſe to calme unquiet hearts. *Adam* in Paradiſe daſhed upon

* Prov. 15. 23.

*Pſ. 104. 27

* Luke 12. 42

*Eccl. 3. 11

upon the rock of discontent (which some Divines conceive was his first sin.) This with many instances more in Scripture, together with our own sad experience, doth both speak our danger and call for caution. Now *godlinesse* is the onely sovereigne Antidote against this spreading disease; and Gods *grace* alone (being setled and exercised in the heart) can cause steddinesse in stormy times *. Whereas, *contentation ariseth either from the fruition of all comforts, or from a not desiring of some which we have not* *. True piety doth put a Christian into such a condition: Hereby we both possess God, and are taught how to improve him who is the onely satisfying everlasting portion of his people *. Herein Christ (though poor in this world *) greatly rejoyced. *The Lord is the portion of my inheritance, the lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage* *: upon this account also *Jacob* said, *I have enough* *; or (as it is in the Original) I have all. God the Father, and Christ his Sonne had sweet satisfaction in each other when there was no other being *; therefore such who possess and improve God through Christ, cannot possibly be dis-

*Heb. 13. 9

* Dr. *Hall.*

* Psal. 73. 25, 26.

*Mat. 8. 20

*Ps. 16. 5, 6

Ubi bene esse poterit sine te? ubi male esse poterit cum te? Bern.

* Gen. 33. 11

* Prov. 8. 30, 31.

diſſatisfied. The Almighty is the God of *all grace**, of *all comfort* *; and *of ſalvations* *; in which reſpects neither deficiencies or diſappointments, loſſes or croſſes can cauſe diſquieting diſcontents in that boſome where faith is commander in chief. The Prophet *Habakkuk* rejoyced in the *God of his ſalvation*, when *the peſtilence went before him* *, *and burning coals came forth of his feet*; and when he ſuppoſed all creature-ſuccors both for delight and neceſſity to be quite removed. This, this is the life which Chriſtians ſhould endeavor, and may attaine by the vigorous regular actings of precious faith. This is the gaine of Contentment, which comes in by godlineſſe, when providences are black and likely to be bloody; now, *The juſt ſhall live by his faith* *. That ſpeech of learned Mr. *Gataker* is weighty, and well worth the marking, *A contented minde argues a religious heart, and a diſcontented minde argues an irreligious heart.* And that worthy Divine Mr. *Greenham* was bold to ſay, *They never felt Gods love, or taſted forgivenes of ſins, who are diſcontented.* This likewiſe was an holy breathing of reverend Dr. *Hall* in his Meditations, *I have ſomewhat of the beſt things, I will with thank-*

* 1 Pet. 5. 10
* 2 Cor. 1. 4
* Pſ. 68. 20
* Hab. 3. 5
* V. 17, 18
* Hab. 2, 4. * Heb. 10. 38.

thankfulneſſe enjoy them, and will want the reſt with contentment. By attaining and maintaining this frame of heart, we might have much of heaven on this ſide heaven. Holy contentment maketh them truly rich, whom the oppreſſing world maketh very poor*. Hereby our ſweeteſt morſels ſhall be well ſeaſoned, and our bittereſt potions well ſweetned*. Had we learned to enjoy contentment in *Jehovah*, who is immutable and all-ſufficient, this heavenly frame of ſpirit ſhould never periſh or change in the mid'ſt of the moſt amazing alterations in Church and Sate, with which his Majeſty is pleaſed to exerciſe us; whereas becauſe we live alone upon ſublunaries, therefore we are apt with *Nabal* to die upon the neſt*, through dejectedneſſe, upon the approach of imagined dangers. When God ſeeth cauſe to cut us ſhort of many creature-accommodations, faith will moderate our deſires after them, aſſuring the ſoul that nothing is withdrawn, or withheld, which might be really advantageous; and doubtleſſe it is a great piece of happineſſe upon earth, not to long after that which the Lord is pleaſed to deny *. Indeed men act rather like Heathens then Chri-

* *Dives eſt qui ſuâ ſorte gaudet, animus eſt potiſſimùm qui divites facit.* Sen.

* Pro. 17. 1

Nihil tam acerbum eſt, in quo non æquus animus ſolatium inveniat. Id.

* 1 Sam. 25. 37

* *Beatus eſt qui quæ non habet, non cupit.* Aug. *Omnia habet, qui nihil concupiſcit.* Sen.

Christians, when they fret upon some particular inferiour disappointments, notwithstanding Gods liberality laid forth upon them in many other respects. As *Alexander* the Monarch of the world was discontented, because Ivie would not grow in his gardens at *Babylon*. *Diogenes* the Cynick was herein more wise, who finding a Mouse in his sachel, said, he saw that himself was not so poore, but some were glad of his leavings. Oh how might we (if we had hearts to improve higher providences) rock our peevish spirits quiet by much stronger arguments! let us then lay before our eyes the practises of pious men recorded in Scripture for our imitation, as *Jacob*, *Agur*, *Paul*, *&c.* *and let us charge home upon our consciences, divine exhortations backed with strong reasons, and encouraged with sweet promises. It was the grave counsel of holy *Greenham*; *Having food and raiment, take the rest as an overplus.* Are we not lesse then the least of Gods mercies? Is not God our bountiful benefactor? why then do we not rest contented with his liberal allowance? Oh let us chide our wrangling spirits, and encourage confidence with contentment in God, as blest-

* Gen. 28. 20
Prov. 30. 8
1 Tim. 6. 7.
Gen. 32. 10
Psal. 43. 5.

blessed *David* did. My pen hath outrun my purpose when I undertook this Preface; but I will no longer (good Reader) detaine thee in the porch, wherein I have designed to quicken and to prepare thee to the more fruitful improvement of this seasonable, useful Treatise; wherein the Authour hath exercised to good purpose, both the Christian graces, and ministerial gifts with which God hath enriched him. Herein the Doctrine of Christian contentment is clearly illustrated, and profitably applied; the special cases (wherein through change of providences discontents are most commonly occasioned,) are particularized, and preservatives applyed to secure the soul. Although some other worthy Divines have been helpful to the Church of God by their discourses upon this subject; yet there is much of peculiar use in this Treatise. The Apostle tells us that some *manifestation of the Spirit is given unto every man to profit withal**. Thy soul-profit is propounded as the Authours end in publishing this piece: and that this end may be accomplished, is the unfained desire, and hearty prayer of him who is

*1 Cor. 12. 7

Thy servant in and for Christ,

May 3. 1653. SIMEON ASHE.

THE ART OF DIVINE CONTENTMENT.

CHAP. I.

The Introduction to the Text.

Phil. 4. 11.

I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

THese words are brought in by way of *Prolepsis*, to anticipate and prevent an Objection. The Apostle had in the former Verses, laid down many grave and heavenly exhortations;

among the rest, to be *carefull for nothing*, Verse 6. Not to exclude, 1. *A prudential care**. For, *He that provideth not for his owne house, hath denyed the Faith, and is worse then an Infidel.* Nor, 2. A *Religious care.* For, we must give all *diligence to make our Calling and Election sure**. But 3. To exclude all * *anxious care* about the issues and events of things; *Take no thought for your life, what you shall eat* *; and in this sense it should be a Christians care not to be carefull. The word in the Greeke [*Carefull*] comes from a Primitive *, that signifies, *To cut the heart in pieces*, a soule-dividing Care: take heed of this. We are bid to *commit* * *our way unto the Lord*: the Hebrew word is, *Roll** *thy way upon the Lord.* It is our work to cast care

* *Neque enim prohibetur quòd homo de rebus in posterum necessariis non solicitetur.* Aquin. *in* Heb. 13. 1 Tim. 5. 8.

* 2 Pet. 1. 10.

* *Jubet Apostolus, ut deponatur anxia cura, quòd illa non nisi ex infidelitate proficiscatur.* Zanchy. * Mat. 6. 25.

* Dicitur μεριμνᾶν πρὶ τὸ μερίζειν τ̃ νοῦν.

* Psal. 37. 5

*גול על יהוה דרכה.

care*, and it is Gods work to take care. By our immoderacy we take his work out of his hand. * 1 Pet. 5. 7.

Care, when it is *excentrick*, either diſtruſtful, or diſtracting, is very diſhonourable to God, it takes away his providence as if he ſate in heaven, and minded not what became of things here below; like a man that makes a clock, and then leaves it to go of it ſelf. Immoderate care takes the heart off from better things; and uſually while we are thinking how we ſhall do to live, we forget how to die. *Curis tabeſcimus omnes.* —— Care is a ſpiritual canker, that doth waſt and diſpirit, *& cut bone.* We may ſooner by our care add a *furlong* to our grief, then a *cubit* to our comfort. God doth threaten it as a curſe; *They ſhall eat their bread with carefulneſs**: better faſt, then eat of that bread. *Be careful for nothing.* * Ezek. 12. 19.

Now leſt any one ſhould ſay,

yea, *Paul*, thou preacheſt that to us, which thou haſt ſcarce learned thy ſelf; Haſt thou learned not to be carefull? The Apoſtle ſeems tacitly to anſwer that, in the words of the Text; *I have learned in whatſoever ſtate I am, therewith to be content.*

Egregia Sententia! A ſpeech worthy to be engraven upon our hearts, and to be written in letters of Gold upon the Crownes and Diadems of Princes. The Text doth branch it ſelf into theſe two general parts.

I. The Scholar, *Paul*: *I have learned.*

II. The Leſſon: *In every ſtate to be content.*

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

The first branch of the Text. The Scholar, *with the first Propoſition.*

I Begin with the firſt. I. The Scholar, and his proficiency; *I have learned.* Out of which I ſhall *in tranſitu* obſerve two things by way of paraphraſe. 1. It is not ἤκουσα, but ἔμαθον. The Apoſtle doth not ſay, I have *heard*, that in every ſtate I ſhould be content; but, I have *learned.* Whence 1. Doctr. *It is not enough for Chriſtians to hear their duty, but they muſt learne their duty.* It is one thing to heare, and another thing to learne; as it is one thing to eat, and another thing to concoct. Saint *Paul* was a Practi-

I. 1. *Obſerv.* ἔμαθον, it is a practique word. 1. Doctr.

tioner. Christians hear much, but it is to be feared, learn little. There were four sorts of ground in the Parable*, and but one good ground. An embleme of this truth; many *Hearers*, but few *Learners*. There are two things which keep us from learning.

*Luk. 8.5.

1. 1. *Slighting what we hear.* Christ is the *Pearle of Price*; when we disesteeme this Pearle, we shall never learne, either its value, or its vertue. The Gospel is a rare Mystery; in one place it is call'd the * *Gospel of Grace*, in another, * *the Gospel of Glory*; because in it, as in a transparant Glasse the glory of God is resplendent; But, he that hath learned to contemne this Mystery, will hardly ever learn to obey it. He that looks upon the things of Heaven as things by the by, and perhaps the driving of a trade, or carrying on some politick designe to be of greater importance; this

*τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς χαρίτος Θ. Act. 20.24

* τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς δόξης. 1 Cor. 4.4.

this man is in the high road to damnation, and will hardly ever learne the things of his peace. Who will learne that which he thinks is ſcarce worth learning?

2. *Forgetting what we hear**. If a Scholar have his Rules laid before him, and he forgets them as faſt as he reads them, he will never learn*. *Ariſtotle* calls the Memory, the *Scribe* of the Soul; and *Bernard* calls it the *Stomack* of the Soul, becauſe it hath a retentive faculty, and turnes heavenly food into blood and ſpirits. We have great memories in other things; we remember that which is *vain*. *Cyrus* could remember the name of every Souldier in his huge Army; we remember *injuries**. This is to fill a precious Cabinet with dung; but, *quàm facilis oblivio boni!* as *Hierom* ſaith, how ſoon do we forget the ſacred truths of God? We are apt to forget three things, our *faults*, our

2.
* *Tantum ſcimus quantum in memoria tenemus*, Plato *in* Timæo.
* Jam. 1. 25.

* *Scribit in marmore læſus.* Cicero l. 2. de orat.

friends, our *inſtructions*. Many Chriſtians are like Sieves; put a Sieve into the water, and it is full; but take it forth of the water, and all runnes out: So, while they are hearing of a Sermon, they remember ſomething; but *take the Sieve out of the water*, aſſoone as they are gone out of the Church, all is forgotten. *Let theſe ſayings* (ſaith Chriſt) *ſinke down into your eares**; in the Original it is, *put theſe ſayings into your eares**. As a man that would hide a jewel from being ſtollen, locks it up ſafe in his cheſt. *Let them ſinke*; The word muſt not only fall as dew that wets the leafe, but as raine which ſoakes to the root of the tree, and makes it fructifie. Oh how often doth Satan, that fowle of the Aire, pick up the good ſeed that is ſowne!

* Luke 9. 44

* θέσθε εἰμεῖς.

Uſe, Trial. *Uſe.* Let me put you upon a ſerious tryall; Some of you have heard

heard much; you have lived forty, fifty, ſixty years under the bleſſed Trumpet of the Goſpel; What have you learned? You may have heard a thouſand Sermons, and yet not learned one. Search your conſciences.

1. You have heard much againſt ſin: are you *Hearers*? or are you *Scholars*? 1.

How many Sermons have you heard againſt *Covetouſneſſe*; That it is the *root*, on which Pride, Idolatry, Treaſon do grow*? one cals it a * Metropolitan ſin: It is *malum complexum*, it doth twiſt a great many ſinnes in with it. There is hardly any ſinne, but Covetouſneſſe is a maine ingredient into it; and yet are you like the two daughters of the Horſ-leach, that cry, *Give, give*. How much have you heard againſt *raſh Anger*, that it is a ſhort phrenſie, a * dry drunkenneſſe; That it reſts in the *boſome*

* 2 Tim. 4. 2 & 4.

* Μητρόπολιν πάσης κακίας.

* *Ira eſt brevis inſania.* Sen.

* *Quid prodeſt vinum non bibere, & irâ inebriari?* Hieron. Ecclesiast. 7. 9.

* *Magnoque irarum fluctuat æſtu* Virg.

boſome of fooles *; and upon the leaſt occaſion do your ſpirits * begin to take fire? How much have you heard againſt *Swearing?* It is Chriſts expreſſe mandate, *Sweare not at all**; this ſinne of all other may be tearm'd the *unfruitful work of darkneſſe**. It is neither ſweetned with pleaſure, nor enriched with profit (the uſual vermilion wherewith Satan doth paint ſinne.) Swearing is forbidden with a *ſub pœna.* While the ſwearer ſhoots his oaths, like *flying arrows* at God, to pierce his glory; God ſhoots a *flying roll* of curſes* againſt him; and do you make your tongue a *racket*, by which you toſſe oaths as Tenis-balls? Do you ſport your ſelves with oaths as the Philiſtines did with *Samſon*, which will at laſt pull the houſe about your eares? Alas! how have they learned what ſin is, that have not yet learned

* Mat. 5. 34.

*Eph. 5. 11

* Zach. 5. v. 2, & 4

learned to leave ſinne? doth he know what a viper is, that playes with it?

2. You have heard much of Chriſt, have you learned Chriſt? The Jewes (as one ſaith) carried Chriſt in their *Bibles*, but not in their *heart.**; Their ſound *went into all the earth**, Rom. 10. 18. The Prophets and Apoſtles were as Trumpets, whoſe ſound went abroad into the world; yet many thouſands who heard the noiſe of theſe Trumpets, had not learned Chriſt, *They have not all obeyed*, ver. 16*.

* Hieron.

* Rom. 10. 18.

* ἀλλ' οὐ πάντες ὑπήκουσαν.

1. A man may know much of Chriſt, and yet not learn Chriſt. The *devils* knew Chriſt*.

* Mar. 1. 24.

2. A man may preach Chriſt, and yet not learn Chriſt; as *Judas* and the pſeudo-Apoſtles*.

* Phil. 5. 15

3. A man may profeſſe Chriſt and yet not learn Chriſt. There are many Profeſſors in the world

world that Christ will professe a-
* Mat. 7. 22, 33. gainst*.

Quest. *Quest*, What is it then to learne
Ans. 1. Christ? *Answ.* 1. To learn Christ is to be *made like Christ*; when the divine Characters of his Holiness are engraven upon our hearts. *We all with open face, beholding as in a glasse the glory of the Lord, are changed*
* 2 Cor. 3 18. *into the same image**. There is a
μεταμορφόμεθα. Metamorphosis made; a sinner viewing Christs Image in the glasse of the Gospel, is transformed into that Image. Never did any man look upon Christ with a spiritual eye, but went away quite changed. A true Saint is a divine Landskip or picture, where all the rare beauties of Christ are lively pourtrayed and drawn forth. He hath the same Spirit, the same judgment, the same will with Jesus Christ.

2. To learne Christ, is to *believe*
* Joh. 20. 28. in him; *My Lord, my God**. When we do not only *credere Deum*, but *in Deum*

Deum; which is the actual application of Christ to our selves, and as it were the spreading of the sacred medicine of his blood upon our souls. You that have heard much of Christ, and yet cannot with an humble adherence say, *My Jesus*; be not offended if I tell you. the devil can say his Creed as well as you.

3. To learne Christ, is to *live Christ*. When we have Bible-conversations, our lives as rich Diamonds cast a sparkling lustre in the Church of God*; and are (in some sense) parallel with the life of Christ, as the Transcript with the Original. So much for the first notion of the word.

* Phil. 1. 27.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Containing the second Proposition.

II. II. THis word ἐμαθον, *I have learned*, is a word imports difficulty, it shews how hardly the Apostle came by his contentment of minde; it was not *naturâ genitum*. St. *Paul* did not come naturally by it, but he had *learned* it*; It coſt him many a prayer and tear, it was taught him by the Spirit.

2. *Obſerv.* ἔμαθον is a word imports difficulty.

*Ἐμαθον *significat hanc rem eſſe diſciplinæ, & exercitationis, & ſe divinitus edoctum eſſe.* Eſtius *in loc.* Beza.

Non ex revelatione, aut ex libris didicit ſed ex longo rerum uſu, & gratiâ Chriſti per Spiritum reſidente. Zanchy.

Whence *Doct.* 2. *Good things are hard to come by.* The buſineſſe of religion is not ſo facile as moſt do imagine. I have *learned*, ſaith St. *Paul**. Indeed you need not learn a man to ſinne, this is

Doctr. 2.

* Ἀρα διδασκαλίας ἐςὶ τὸ πρᾶγμα καὶ γυμνασίας καὶ μελέτης, ἃ γὰ ἐυκατόρθωτον ἐςιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ σφόδρα δύσκολον, καὶ πολύ. Chryſoſt.

is natural*, and therefore facile, it comes as water out of a Spring. 'Tis an easie thing to be wicked; Hell will be taken without storm*; but matter of Religion must be learned. To cut the flesh is easie; but to prick a vain, and not cut an artery is hard. The trade of sinne needs not to be learned, but the *Art of Divine Contentment* is not atchieved without holy industry; ἐμαθον *I have learned.*

*Psl. 58. 3.

* *Facilis descensus Averni.*

There are two pregnant reasons, why there must be so much study and exercitation.

1. Becausе spirituall things are *against nature.* Every thing in Religion is antipodes to nature. There are in Religion two things, *Credenda, & Facienda,* and both are against nature. 1. *Credenda,* Matters of *faith.* As, for a man to be justified by the righteousnesse of another, to become a foole that he may be wise, to save all by losing all; this is *against nature.* 2. *Facienda*

1. *Contra naturam.*

1. *Credenda*

2. *Facienda*

enda, Matters of *Practise*. As, 1. *Selfe-denial*; for a man to deny his own *wisdome*, and see himselfe blinde; his own *will*, and have it melted into the will of God; plucking out the right eye, beheading and crucifying that sin, which is the *favorite*, and lies neareſt to the heart*; For a man to be dead to the world, and in the midst of want to abound; for him to take up the Crosse, and follow Christ, not only in golden, but bloody paths; to embrace Religion when it is dress'd in its night-cloaths, all the Jewels of honour and preferment being pull'd off; this is *against nature*, and therefore must, be learned. 2. *Selfe-examination*. For a man to take his heart (as a watch) all in pieces; to set up a spiritual inquisition, or Court of conscience, and traverse things in his own soul; to take *Davids* candle and lantern*, and search for sin; nay, as Judge to passe the sentence upon him-

**Peccatum in deliciis* Bern.

Malumus vitium excusare, quam excutere Sen.

**Psal. 119 Vers. 105.*

himſelf, * this is *againſt nature*, and will not eaſily be attained to without Learning. 3. *Self-reformation* To ſee a man as *Caleb*, *of another ſpirit*, walking antipodes to himſelf, the current of his life altered, and running into the channel of Religion; this is wholly *againſt nature*; When a ſtone aſcends, it is not a natural motion, but a violent; the motion of the ſoul heaven-ward, is a violent motion, it muſt be learned: fleſh and blood is not skill'd in theſe things: Nature can no more caſt out Nature, then Satan can caſt out Satan.

* 2 Sam. 24.17. *Me me, adſum qui feci in me convertite ferrum.*

2. Becauſe ſpiritual things are *above nature*. There are ſome things *in nature* that are hard to find out, as the cauſes of things, which are not learned without ſtudie. *Ariſtotle*, a great Phyloſopher (whom ſome have call'd an Eagle fallen from the clouds,) yet could not finde out the motion of the River *Euripus*, there-

2. *Supranaturam.*

fore threw himſelf into it; What then are divine things, which are in a ſphere above Nature, and beyond all humane diſquiſition? as the Trinity, the hypoſtatical Union, the myſtery of Faith; to beleeve againſt hope; onely Gods Spirit can light our candle here. The Apoſtle calls theſe *the deep things of God**. The Goſpel is full of Jewels, but they are lock'd up from ſenſe and reaſon. The Angels in heaven are ſearching into theſe ſacred depths*.

*Τα βαθη τȣ̃ Θεȣ̃. 1 Cor. 2.10

* 1 Pet. 1. 12.

Uſe. *Uſe.* Let us beg the Spirit of God to teach us; we muſt be *divinitùs edocti*: The Eunuch could read, but he could not underſtand, till *Philip joyned himſelf to his chariot**. Gods Spirit muſt joyn himſelf to our chariot; He muſt teach, or we cannot learn: *All thy children ſhall be taught of the Lord**. A man may read the figure on the Diall, but he cannot tell how the day goes, unleſs the Sun ſhine upon the Diall; we may read the

*Act. 8 29

* Iſai. 54. 13.

the Bible over, but we cannot learn to purpoſe; till the Spirit of God *ſhine into our hearts* *. Oh, implore this bleſſed Spirit, it is Gods Prerogative Royall to teach. *I am the Lord thy God, that teacheth thee to profit* *. Miniſters may *tell* us our leſſon, God onely can *teach* us; We have loſt both our hearing and eye-ſight, therefore are very unfit to learn. Ever ſince *Eve* liſtened to the Serpent, we have been deafe; and ſince ſhe looked on the tree of Knowledge, we have been blinde; but when God comes to teach, he removes theſe impedements*. We are naturally *dead* *; who will go about to teach a dead man? Yet behold, God undertakes to make dead men to underſtand myſteries! God is the grand Teacher. This is the reaſon the word preached works ſo differently upon men: two in a Pew; the one is wrought upon effectually, the other lies at the Or-

* 2 Cor. 4. 6

* Iſai 48. 17.

* Iſa. 35. 5. * Eph. 2. 1.

dinances as a dead childe at the breſt, and gets no nouriſhment. What is the reaſon? becauſe the heavenly gale of the Spirit blowes upon one, and not upon the other; One hath *the anointing of God, which teacheth him all things**, the other hath it not. Gods Spirit ſpeakes ſweetly, but irreſiſtibly. In that heavenly doxology, none could ſing the new ſong, but thoſe who were *ſealed in their foreheads**: reprobates could not ſing it*. Thoſe that are skilfull in the myſteries of ſalvation, muſt have the ſeal of the Spirit upon them. Let us make this our prayer, *Lord, breath thy Spirit into thy Word*: and we have a promiſe, which may adde wings to prayer. *If* ye then being evill, know how to give good gifts to your children: how much more ſhall your heavenly Father give his Spirit to them that ask him?*

* 1 John 2. 27.

* Rev. 14. 2

* *Novum Canticum reprobi diſcere non poſſunt.* Paræus.

* Luke 11. 13.

And thus much of the firſt part of the

the Text, *The Scholar*, which I intended only as a ſhort gloſſe or paraphraſe.

CHAP. IV.

The ſecond branch of the Text, The Leſſon *it ſelfe, with the Propoſition.*

II. I Come now to the ſecond, which is the maine thing, *The Leſſon* it ſelfe; *In whatever ſtate I am, therewith to be content.* II.

Here was a rare piece of learning indeed, and certainly more to be wondered at in Saint *Paul*, that he knew how to turne himſelfe to every condition, then all the learning in

the world beſides, which hath been ſo applauded in former ages by *Julius Cæſar*, *Ptolomy*, *Xenophon*, the great admirers of Learning.

The Text hath but few words in it, *In every ſtate content*; but if that be true which once *Fulgentius* ſaid, that the moſt golden ſentence is ever meaſured by *brevity* and *ſuavity*, then this is a moſt accompliſhed ſpeech: here is *magnum in parvo*. The Text is like a precious Jewel, little in *quantity*, but great in *worth* and *value*.

Doct. The maine Propoſition I ſhall inſiſt upon, is this. *That a gracious ſpirit is a contented ſpirit.* The Doctrine of contentment is very ſuperlative; and till we have learned this, we have not learned to be Chriſtians.

1. It is an *hard Leſſon*. The Angels in heaven had not learned it; they were not contented. Though their eſtate was very glorious, yet they

they were ſtill ſoaring aloft and aimed at ſomething higher. *Jude ver. 6. The Angels which kept not their firſt eſtate.* They kept not their eſtate, becauſe they were not contented with their eſtate. Our firſt Parents cloath'd with the white robe of innocency in Paradiſe, had not learned to be content; they had aſpiring hearts, and thinking their humane nature too low and home-ſpun, would be crowned with the Deity, and be *as gods* *; Though they had the choice of all the trees in the Garden, yet none would content them, but the *tree of Knowledge*, which they ſuppoſed would have been as eye-ſalve to have made them omniſcient. Oh then, if this Leſſon were ſo hard to learne *in innocency*, how hard ſhall we finde it*, who are clogged with corruption?

* Gen. 3. 5.

* *Ars omnino mira & difficilis, quæ toto cordis alniſu diſcenda eſt.* Greg. hom. 16. in Ezech.

2. It is of *Univerſal extent*, it concernes all. 1. It concernes *Rich men.* One would think it needleſſe

to presse those to Contentment whom God hath blessed with great estates, but rather perswade them to be humble and thankfull; nay, but I say, *Be content.* Rich men have their discontents as well as others. As appears, 1. When they have a great estate, yet they are discontented that they have no more; they would make the hundred talents a thousand. A man in wine, the more he drinks, the more he thirsts: Covetousnesse is a dry dropsie; an earthly heart is like the *grave, that is never satisfied**; therefore I say to you rich men, *Be content.*

2. Rich men, if we may suppose them to be content with their estates, (which is very seldome;) yet, though they have *estate* enough, they have not *honour* enough*; if their *barnes* are full enough, yet their *turrets* are not high enough. They would be some body in the world, as *Theudas who boasted himselfe to be some body**; they

**Sicut hydropicus, Quò plus sunt potæ, plus siti untur aquæ* Hyperius.

*Prov. 30. 16.

* τὴν εὐδοξίαν ἡδὺ ἡγοῦνται.

*Act. 5. 36.

they never go ſo chearfully as when the winde of honor and applauſe fills their ſails; if this wind be down, they are diſcontented. One would think *Haman* had as much as his proud heart could deſire; he was ſet above all the Princes, advanced upon the pinacle of honour to be the ſecond man in the Kingdom*; yet in the midſt of all his pompe, becauſe *Mordecai* would not uncover and kneele, he is diſcontented, *verſ.* 2. and full of wrath, *verſ.* 5. and there is no way to aſſwage this pleuriſie of revenge, but by letting all the Jewes blood, and offering them up in ſacrifice. The itch of honour is ſeldom allayed without blood; therefore I ſay to you rich men, *Be content.*

*Eſth. 3. 1.

3. Rich men, if we may ſuppoſe them to be content with their honour, and magnificent titles; yet they have not alwayes Contentment in their *relations.* She that lies in the boſome, may ſometimes blow the coals

coales; as *Jobs* wife, who in a pet would have him fall out with God himſelf, *Curſe God and die.* Sometimes children cauſe diſcontent; how oft is it ſeen that the mothers milk doth nouriſh a Viper? and he that once ſucked her breaſt, goes about to ſuck her blood? Parents do often *of Grapes* gather thornes, and of *Figs* thiſtles; Children are Sweet-briar. Like the Roſe, which is a fragrant flower; but, as *Baſil* ſaith, it hath its prickles. Our Relative comforts are not all pure wine, but mixed; they have in them more dregs then ſpirits, and are like that River *Plutarch* ſpeaks of*, where the waters in the morning runne ſweet, but in the evening run bitter. We have no *charter of exemption* granted us in this life; therefore rich men had need be called upon to be contented.

* γλυκὺ-πικρον.

2. The Doctrine of Contentment concernes poore men. You that do ſuck ſo liberally from the breſts

breſts of providence, *be content*; it is an hard Leſſon, therefore it had need be ſet upon the ſooner. How hard is it when the livelihood is even gone, a great eſtate boyled away almoſt to nothing, then to becontent? The means of ſubſiſtence is in Scripture called *our life*, becauſe it is the very ſinewes of life. The woman in the Goſpel ſpent *all her living upon the Phyſicians** ; in the Greek it is, ὅλον τὸν βίον, She ſpent her whole life upon the Phyſicians, becauſe ſhe ſpent her means by which ſhe ſhould live. 'Tis much when poverty hath clipped our wings, then to be content: but, *difficilia pulchra*; though hard, it is excellent; and the Apoſtle here had learnt *in every ſtate to be content*.

* Luk. 8. 43.

God had brought Saint *Paul* into as great variety of conditions, as ever we read of any man, and yet he was content; elſe ſure he could never have gone through it with ſo much chear-

chearefulneſſe. See into what viciſſitudes this bleſſed Apoſtle was caſt. * 2 Cor. 4. 8. *We are troubled on every ſide**, there was the *ſadneſſe* of his condition; *but not diſtreſſed*, there was his *content* in that condition; *We are perplexed*, there is his *affliction*; but *not in deſpaire*, there is his contentation. And if we read a little further, *In affflictions** 2 Cor. 6. 4 *, in neceſſities, in diſtreſſes, in ſtripes, in impriſonments, in tumults, &c.* there is his trouble: and behold his content; * verſ. 10. * *As having nothing yet poſſeſſing all things.* When the Apoſtle was driven out of all, yet in regard of that ſweet Contentment of minde (which was like muſick in his ſoul,) he poſſeſſed all. We read a ſhort Map or Hiſtory of his ſuffer- * 2 Cor. 11. 23, 24, 25. ings, *In priſons more frequent** , *in deaths oft, &c.* Yet behold the bleſſed frame and temper of his ſpirit, *I have learned in whatſoever ſtate I am, therewith to be content.*

Which way ſoever Providence did

did blow, he had such heavenly skill and dexterity, that he knew how to steer his course. For his outward estate he was indifferent; he could be either on the top of *Jacobs* ladder, or the bottom; he could sing either *placentia* or *lachrymæ*, the dirge or the antheme; he could be any thing that God would have him: *I know how to want, how to abound*; here is a rare patterne for us to imitate. *Paul* in regard of his faith and courage, was like a Cedar, he could not be stirred; but for his outward condition, he was like a *Reed*, bending every way with the wind of Providence. When a prosperous gale did blow upon him, he could bend with that *I know how to be full*: and when a boysterous gust of affliction did blow, he could bend in humility with that; *I know how to be hungry*. Saint *Paul* was ἀνὴρ τετράγωνος (as *Aristotle* speaks) like a *Die*, that hath foure squares; throw it which way you wil, it

Homo quadratus. Eraſm.

it fals upon a bottome: Let God throw the Apoſtle which way he would, he fell upon this *bottome* of Contentment. A contented ſpirit is like a Watch; though you carry it up and down with you; yet the ſpring of it is not ſhaken, nor the wheeles out of order, but the watch keeps its perfect motion: So it was with St. *Paul*, though God had carried him into various conditions, yet he was not lift up with the one, nor caſt down with the other. The *ſpring* of his heart was not broken, the *wheels* of his affections were not diſordered, but kept their conſtant motion towards heaven; *ſtill content.* The Ship that lies at anchor may ſometimes be a little ſhaken, but never ſinks: Fleſh and blood may have its fears and diſquiets, but grace doth check them: A Chriſtian having caſt anchor in heaven, his heart never ſinks; a gracious ſpirit is a contented ſpirit.

This

This is a rare Art, *Paul* did not learn it at the feet of *Gamaliel*. *I am instructed*: μεμύημαι*, *verſ.* 12. I am initiated into this holy* myſtery; as if he had ſaid, I have gotten the *divine Art*, I have the knack of it; God muſt make us right Artiſts. If we ſhould put ſome men to an Art that they were not skill'd in, how unfit would they be for it? put an husband-man to Limning or drawing Pictures, what ſtrange work would he make? this is out of his ſphere. Take a Limner that is exact in laying of colours and put him to plough, or ſet him to planting and graſting of trees, this is not his Art, he is not skill'd in it; Bid a natural man live by faith, and when all things go croſſe, *Be contented*, you bid him do that he hath no skill in, you may as well bid a childe guide the ſterne of a Ship; To live contented upon God in the deficiency of outward comforts, is an Art which *fleſh and blood*

* μεμύημαι. * *Myſteriis initiatus ſum.* Zanchy *Sacris imbutus ſum.* Ambroſ.

blood hath not revealed; nay, many of Gods own children, who excel in some duties of Religion, when they come to this of *Contentment*, how do they bungle? they have scarce commenced Masters of this Art.

CHAP. V.

The resolving of some Questions.

FOr the illustration of this Doctrine, I shall propound these Questions.

Quest. *Quest.* 1. Whether a Christian may not be sensible of his condition, and yet be contented?

Ans. 1. *Answ.* Yes; For else he is not a *Saint*, but a *Stoick*. *Rachel* did well to weep for her children, (*there was nature*;) but her fault was, she refused to be comforted, (*there was discontent.*)

content.) Christ himselfe was *sensible* when he sweat great drops of blood, and said; *Father if it be possible, let this cup passe from me* *: yet he was *contented*; and sweetly submitted his will. *Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.* The Apostle bids us *humble our selves under the mighty hand of God* *, which we cannot do unlesse we are sensible of it.

* Mat. 26. 39.

* 2 Pet. 5. 6.

Qu. 2. Whether a Christian may not lay open his grievances to God, and yet be contented?

Quest.

Answ. Yes: *Unto thee have I opened my cause,* Jer. 20. 12. * and *David poured out his complaint before the Lord* *. We may cry to God, and desire him to write down all our injuries; Shall not the childe complaine to his Father? When any burden is upon the spirit, Prayer gives vent, it easeth the heart: *Hannah's* spirit was burdened, *I am* (saies she) *a woman of a troubled spirit* *.

Answ.

* Jer. 20. 12.

* Ps. 142. 2.

* 1 Sam. 1. 18.

Now having prayed and wept, she went away, and was no more sad; onely, here is the difference between an holy complaint, and a discontented complaint; in the one we complain *to* God, in the other we complain *of* God.

Quest. *Quest.* 3. What is it properly that Contentment doth exclude?

Answ. *Answ.* There are three things which Contentment doth banish out of its Diocess, and can by no means consist with it.

What contentment excludes.

1. It excludes a *vexatious repining*, this is properly the daughter of Discontent. *I mourn in my complaint**: he doth not say, I murmur in my complaint. Murmuring is no better then mutinie in the heart; it is a rising up against God. When the Sea is rough and unquiet, it casts forth nothing but foame; when the heart is discontented, it casts forth the foame of anger, impatience, and sometimes little better then blasphemy.

*Ps. 55 2.

my. Murmuring is nothing else but the scum which boiles off from a discontented heart.

2. It excludes an *uneven discomposure*: When a man saith, I am in such straits, that I know not how to evolve or get out, I shall be undone. Head and heart are so taken up, that a man is not fit to pray, or meditate, &c. he is not himself: just as when an Army is routed, one man runs this way, and another that, the Army is put into disorder: So a mans thoughts runne up and down distracted. Discontent doth dislocate and unjoynt the soul, it pulls off the wheels.

3. It excludes a *childish despondency*; and this is usually consequent upon the other. A man being in an hurry of mind, not knowing which way to extricate, or winde himself out of the present trouble, begins *succumbere oneri*, to faint and sink under it. For Care is to the minde

as a burden to the back, it loads the ſpirits, and with overloading ſinks them. A deſpondent ſpirit is a diſcontented ſpirit.

CHAP. VI.

Shewing the nature of Contentment.

What contentation is

HAving anſwered theſe Queſtions, I ſhall in the next place come to deſcribe this αὐταρκεία, or Contentment

It is a ſweet temper of ſpirit whereby a Chriſtian carries himſelf * in an equal poize in every condition. The nature of this will appear more clear in theſe three Aphoriſms.

* *Se aequanimiter fert* Bede.

1. *Aphoriſm.* Αὐταρκεία *non acquiſitione, ſed infuſione.*

1. Contentment is a *divine thing*; it becomes ours not by *acquiſition*, but *infuſion*, it is a ſlip taken off from the tree of life, and planted by the

the Spirit of God in the ſoul; it is a fruit that grows not in the garden of Philoſophy, but is of an heavenly birth: It is therefore very obſervable, that *Contentment* is joyned with Godlineſſe; and goes in equipage; *But godlineſſe with Contentment is great gaine* *. Contentment being a conſequent of godlineſſe, or concomitant, or *both*: I call it *divine* to contradiſtinguiſh it to that Contentment which a moral man may arrive at. Heathens have ſeemed to have this Contentment, but it was only εἰκὼν τῆς ἀρετῆς, the ſhadow and picture of it, the *Beryll*, not the true *Diamond*: theirs was but *civil*, this is *ſacred*: theirs was only from principles of *Reaſon*, this of *Religion*: theirs was only lighted at Natur's torch, this at the Lamp of Scripture, Reaſon may a little teach Contentment; as thus, Whatever my condition be, this is that I am born to, and if I meet with croſſes, it is

* 1 Tim. 6. 6.

but πάντων φορτίον, a Catholick misery; all have their ſhare, why therefore ſhould I be troubled *? Reaſon may ſuggeſt this; and indeed, this may be rather *conſtraint*, then *content*; but to live ſecurely and chearfully upon God in the abatement of creature-ſupplies, *Religion* only can bring this into the ſouls exchequer.

* *Ferre quam ſortem omnes patiuntur, nemo recuſat.*

2. Contentment is an *intrinſecal thing*, it lies within a man; not in the bark, but the root. Contentment hath both its fountaine, and ſtreame in the ſoul. The Beam hath not its light from the Aire: the beames of comfort which a contented man hath, do not ariſe *extrinſecè* from forreigne comforts, but from within. As ſorrow is ſeated in the ſpirit, *The heart knows its owne grief* *: So Contentment lies within in the *ſoul*, and doth not depend upon externals. Hence I gather, that outward troubles cannot hinder

2. *Aphoriſm.*

* Prov. 14. 10.

this

this bleſſed Contentment; it is a ſpiritual thing, and ariſeth from ſpiritual grounds, *viz. The apprehenſion of Gods love.* When there is a tempeſt without, there may be muſick within: a Bee may ſting through the skin, but it cannot ſting to the heart: Outward afflictions cannot ſting to a Chriſtians heart, where Contentment lies. Thieves may plunder us of our money and plate, but not of this pearle of Contentment, unleſſe we are willing to part with it; for it is locked up in the *cabinet of the heart.* The ſoul which is poſſeſſed of this rich treaſure of Contentment, is like *Noah* in the Ark, that can ſing in the midſt of a Deluge.

3. Contentment is an *Habitual thing*, it ſhines with a fixed light in the firmament of the ſoul. Contentment doth not appear onely now and then, as ſome Starrs which are ſeen but ſeldome: it is a ſetled tem- 3. *Aphoriſm.*

per of the heart. One action doth not denominate: he is not said to be a liberal man, that gives almes once in his life; a covetous man may do so; but he is said to be liberal, that is *given to liberality* *; that is, who upon all occasions is willing to indulge the necessities of the poor: so he is said to be a contented man that is given to Contentment. It is not *casual*, but *constant*. *Aristotle* in his Rhetorick, distinguisheth between colours in the face that arise from *passion*, and those which arise from *complexion*; the pale face may look red when it blusheth, but this is only a passion: he is said properly to be ruddy and sanguine, who is constantly so, it is his complexion. He is not a contented man who is so upon an occasion, (and perhaps when he is pleased;) but who is so constantly, it is the habit and complexion of his soul.

* Rom. 12. 13.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Reaſons preſſing to holy Contentment.

HAving opened the nature of Contentment, I come next to lay down ſome reaſons, or arguments to Contentment, which may preponderate with us.

The firſt is, *Gods precept.* It is charged upon us as a duty; *Be content with ſuch things as you have* *; the ſame God who hath bid us beleeve, hath bid us be content; if we obey not, we runne our ſelves into a ſpiritual *præmunire.* Gods Word is a ſufficient warrant; it hath *authority* in it, and muſt be a *ſuperſedeas*, or *ſacred Spell* to diſcontent; *Ipſe dixit* was enough among *Pythagoras* his Scholars. *Be it enacted*, is the

Reaſon. 1. *Virtute præcepti.*

* Heb. 13. 5.

the Royall ſtile. Gods word muſt be the ſtar that guides, and his Will the weight that moves our obedience; his *fiat* is a Law, and hath majeſty enough in it to captivate us into obedience; our hearts muſt not be more unquiet then the raging ſea, which at his Word is ſtill'd*.

* Mat. 8. 26.

Reaſon 2. Virtute promiſſi.

2. The ſecond reaſon inforcing Contentment, is, *Gods promiſe*: For, *He hath ſaid, I will never leave thee, nor forſake thee*, Hebr. 13, 5. Where God hath engaged himſelfe, under hand and ſeale, for our neceſſary proviſions. If a King ſhould ſay to one of his Subjects, I will take care for thee; as long as I have any Crown-revenewes, thou ſhalt be provided for; if thou art in danger, I will ſecure thee; if in want, I will ſupply thee; would not that Subject be content? Behold, God hath here made a Promiſe to the Beleever, and as it were entered into bond for his ſecurity,

ity, *I will never leave thee*; Shall not this charm down the devil of Diſcontent? *Leave thy fatherles children with me, I will preſerve them alive**. Me thinks I ſee the godly man on his death-bed much diſcontented, and heare him complaining, What will become of my wife and children when I am dead and gone? they may come to poverty: ſaith God, Trouble not thy ſelf, *Be content*, I will take care of thy children, and, *Let thy widow truſt in mee.* God hath made a Promiſe to us, *that he will not leave us*, and hath entail'd the Promiſe upon our *wife and children*, and will not this ſatisfie? True Faith will take Gods ſingle bond without calling for witneſſes.

*Jer. 49. 11

3. Be contented, *by vertue of a Decree.* Whatever our condition be, God the great Umpire of the world hath *ab æterno* decreed that condition for us, and by his providence

Reaſon. 3. *Virtute Decreti.*

dence ordered all appertinances thereunto. Let a Christian often think with himselfe, who hath plac'd me here; whether I am in higher sphere, or in a lower? not chance or fortune, (as the pur-blinde Heathens imagined;) no, it is the wise God that hath by his providence fixed me in this Orbe: We must act that scene which God will have us; say not, Such a one hath occasioned this to me; look not too much at the under-wheel. We read in *Ezekiel* of *a wheele within a wheel**; Gods *Decree* is the cause of the turning of the wheeles, and his *Providence* is the inner wheele that moves all the rest. Gods Providence is that πηδάλιον or helme, which turnes about the whole ship of the Universe. Say then as holy *David*; I *was silent* *; *because thou*; *Lord, didst it* *. Gods Providence (which is nothing else but the carrying on of

* Ezek. 1. 16.

* נאלם מתי

* Psal. 39. 9.

of his Decree,) ſhould be a *ſuperſedeas* and counterpoiſon againſt diſcontent; God hath ſet us in our ſtation, and he hath done it in wiſdome.

We fancy ſuch a condition of life good for us, whereas if we were our own carvers we ſhould often cut the * worſt peice. *Lot* being put to his choice, did chooſe *Sodom* * which ſoon after was burnt with fire. *Rachel* was very deſirous of children, *Give me children or I die* * ; and it coſt her her life in bringing forth a childe. *Abraham* was earneſt for *Iſhmael, O that Iſhmael may live before thee* * ! but he had little comfort either of him or his ſeed; he was borne a ſon of ſtrife, *His hand was againſt every man, and every mans hand againſt him.* The Diſciples wept for Chriſt's leaving the world, they choſe his corporal preſence, whereas it was beſt for them that Chriſt ſhould

* *Iſta elegimus quæ plus nocent quàm placent.*

* Gen. 13. 10

* Gen. 30. 1.

* Gen. 17. 18.

ſhould be gone, for elſe *the Comforter would not come** *Davi*
* Job, 16. 7 choſe the life of his childe, *he wept*
* 2 Sam. 12, 16. *and faſted for it** ; whereas if the childe had lived; it would have been a perpetual monument of his ſhame. We ſtand oft in our own light; if we ſhould ſort, or parcell out our owne comforts, we ſhould hit upon the wrong. It is not well for the childe, that the Parent doth chuſe for it? were it left to its ſelf, it would perhaps chuſe a knife to cut its own fingers. A man in a paroxyſme calls for wine; which if he had; were little better then poyſon: 'tis well for the Patient, that he is at the Phyſicians appointment.

The conſideration of a Decree determining, and a Providence diſpoſing all things that fall out, ſhould work our hearts to holy Contentment. The wiſe God hath ordered our condition: if he ſees it better for us to abound, we ſhall abound; if

if he ſees it better for us to want, we ſhall want; be content to be at Gods diſpoſe.

God ſees in his infinite wiſdom, the ſame condition is not *convenient* for all; that which is good for one, may be bad for another: one ſeaſon of weather will not ſerve all mens occaſions; one needs *Sunſhine*, another *Raine*: one condition of life will not fit every man, no more then one ſuit of apparell will fit every body: Proſperity is not fit for all, nor yet Adverſity. If one man be brought low, perhaps he can bear it better; he hath a greater ſtock of grace, more faith and patience; he can *gather grapes of thornes*, pick ſome comfort out of the Croſſe; every one cannot do this. Another man is ſeated in an eminent place of dignity; he is fitter for it: perhaps it is a place requires more parts, and judgement, which every one is not capable of*; perhaps he can uſe his eſtate better,

* *Ex omni ligno non fit Mercurius.*

he

he hath a publick *heart* as well as a publick *place*. The wise God sees that condition to be bad for one which is good for another; hence it is he placeth men in different orbes and spheres; some higher, some lower: one man desires *health* God sees sickness better for him; God will worke health out of sickness, by bringing the *body of death* into a consumption. Another man desires *liberty* God sees restraint better for him; he will work his liberty by restraint; when his feet are bound, his heart shall be most enlarged. Did we beleive this, it would give check to the sinfull disputes, and cavills of our hearts, shall I be discontented at that which is enacted by a Decree; and Ordered by a Providence? is this to be a childe, or a rebel?

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

USE. I.

Shewing how a Chriſtian may make his life comfortable.

Uſe I. IT ſhews us how a Chriſtian may come to lead a comfortable life, even an heaven upon earth, be the times what they will; *viz.* by *Chriſtian Contentment**; the comfort of life doth not ſtand ἐν τῷ περισσεύειν, in having much; its Chriſts maxime, *Mans life conſiſteth not in the abundance of the things which he doth poſſeſſe**; but it is in being contented*. Is not the Bee as well contented with feeding on the dew, or

Uſe I. Inform.

* Prov. 15. 13.

* Luk. 12. 15.

* *Nullæ profectò majores ſunt divitiæ, quàm ſuâ ſorte contentum eſſe; hæc enim virtus efficit, ut id quod habet aliquis, ſit ei ſatis, ſuúmque animum in paupertate reddet divitem.* Hyperius.

ſucking from a flower, as the Oxe that grazeth on the mountaines? Contentment lies within a man, *in the heart*: and the way to be comfortable, is not by having our barnes filled, but our minde quiet. The contented man (ſaith *Seneca*) is the happy man; diſcontent is a fretting humor, which dries the braines, waſtes the ſpirits, corrodes and eates out the comfort of life: Diſcontent makes a man that he doth not *enjoy* what he doth *poſſeſſe*. A drop or two of vinegar will ſowre a whole glaſſe of Wine. Let a man have the affluence and confluence of worldly comforts, a drop or two of diſcontent will imbitter and poyſon all. *Comfort* depends upon *Contentment*; *Jacob* went halting when the ſinew upon the hollow of his thigh ſhrank: ſo when the ſinew of Contentment begins to ſhrink, we go halting in our comforts. Contentation is as neceſſary to keep the life comfortable

fortable, as oyle is neceſſary to keep the lamp burning; the clouds of diſcontent do often drop the ſhowrs of tears. Would we have comfort in our lives? we may have it if we will *. A Chriſtian may carve out what condition he will to himſelf*. Why doſt thou complain of thy troubles? it is not trouble that troubles, but diſcontent; it is not the water without the ſhip, but the water that gets within the leak which drownes it; it is not outward affliction that can make the life of a Chriſtian ſad; a contented mind would ſail above theſe waters: but when there's a leak of diſcontent open, and trouble gets into the heart, then it is diſquieted and ſinks. Do therefore as the Marriners, pump the water out and ſtop this ſpiritual leak in thy ſoul, and no trouble can hurt thee.

* *Quiſque eſt fortunæ ſuæ faber.*
* *Quid votis opus eſt? fac te ipſe fœlicem.* Seneca.

CHAP. IX.

Use II.

A check to the discontented Christian.

Reproof. *Use.* II. HEre is a just Reproof to such as are discontented with their condition. This disease is almost Epidemical. * Some not content with their callings which God hath set them in, must be a step higher, from the *plough* to the *throne*, who like the *spider* in the *Proverbs* will *take hold with their hands and be in Kings Palaces*, Prov. 30. 28. others from the *Shop* to the *Pulpit* *; they would be in the Temple of *Honour*, before they are in the Temple of *Vertue*; who step into *Moses* chair,

* *Quis est tam compositæ fœlicitatis, ut non aliquâ ex parte cum statûs sui qualitate rixetur?* Boëtius *de Consol.* Philos. lib. 2.

* Num. 12. 2.

chaire, without *Aaron's* Bells and Pomegranates, like Apes, which do moſt ſhew their deformity when they are climbing. Is it not enough that God hath beſtowed gifts upon men, in private to edifie, that he hath enriched them with many mercies; but, *ſeek they the Prieſt-hood alſo* ?* What is this but diſcontent ariſing from high-flown pride? Theſe do ſecretly taxe the Wiſdome of God, that he hath not ſcrewed them up in their condition a peg higher. *Tentat Superbia, ut frangat.* Every man is complaining that his eſtate is no better, though he ſeldome complaines that his heart is no better. *Suæ quemque conditionis pœnitet:* one man commends this kinde of life, another commends that*; one man thinks a Countrey-life beſt, another a City-life, as the Poet elegantly expreſſeth it.

* Numb. 16. 9.

Aug.

* *Hic utraque circumfluus vitam cælibem deflet, ille nuptiis fœlix, orbus liberis alieno cenſum neutrit hæredi, alim prole lætatus, filii delictis mœſtus illachrymat.* Poëtius.

O fortunati mercatores, gravis annis
Miles ait, multo jam fractus membra labore;
Contrà Mercator navim jactantibus austris,
Militia est potior, quid enim concurritur horæ
Momento? cita mors venit, aut victoria læta. Horat.

The Souldier thinks it beſt to be a Merchant; and the Merchant to be a Souldier. Men can be content to be any thing but what God will have them. We may cry out with the ſame Poet,

Quî ſit, Mecænas, ut nemo quam ſibi ſortem
Seu ratio dederit, ſeu ſors objecerit, illâ
Contentus vivat? laudet diverſa ſequentes? Hor. 1. Satyr.

How is it that no man is contented? Very few Chriſtians have learned

Saint

Saint *Paul's* leſſon; neither poor nor rich know how to be content, they can learn any thing but this.

1. If men are poore, they learn to be, 1. *Envious*: they maligne thoſe that are above them. Anothers proſperity is an ey-ſore. When Gods candle ſhines upon their neighbours Tabernacle, this light offends them. In the midſt of wants men can (in this ſenſe) abound; *viz.* in envy and malice: An *envious* eye is en evil eye. 2. They learne to be *querulous*, ſtill complaining, as if God had dealt hardly with them; they are ever telling of their wants, they want this and that comfort; whereas their greateſt want is a contented ſpirit. Thoſe that are well enough content with their *ſinnes*, yet are not content with their *condition*.

2. If men are rich, they learn to be *covetous*; thirſting inſatiably after the world, and by any unjuſt

means ſcraping it together; *their right hand is full of bribes*, as the Pſalmiſt expreſſeth it *. Put a good cauſe in one ſcale, and a piece of Gold in the other, and the Gold weighs heavieſt. There are (ſaith *Solomon*) four things that ſay, *It is not enough**. I may adde a fifth, *viz.* the *heart of a covetous man*. So that neither poor nor rich know how to be content.

* Pſ. 26. 10

* Pro. 30. 15.

Never certainly ſince the Creation did this ſinne of diſcontent *reign*, or rather *rage*, more then in our times; never was God more diſhonored; you can hardly ſpeak with any, but the paſſion of his tongue betrays the diſcontent of his heart: everyone liſps out his trouble, and here even the ſtammering tongue ſpeaks too freely and fluently.

If we have not what we deſire, God ſhall not have a good look from us, but preſently we are ſick of diſcontent; and readie to die out of an humour. If God will not give the people

people of Israel for their lusts, they bid him take their lives; they must have Quailes to their Manna. *Ahab* though a King (and one would think his Crown-lands had been sufficient for him, yet) is sullen and discontented for want of *Naboths* Vineyard. *Jonah* though a good man and a Prophet, yet ready to die *in a pet* *; and because God kill'd his Gourd, kill me too, saith he. *Rachel*, *Give me children, or I die*, she had many blessings, if she could have seene them, but wanted this of *contentation*. God will *supply our wants*, but must he satisfie our *lusts* too? Many are discontented for a very trifle; another hath a better dresse, a richer jewel, a newer fashion. *Nero* not content with his *Empire*, was troubled that the Musicians had more skill in playing then he: how phantastick are some, that pine away in discontent for the want of those things, which if they had, would

* Jonah 4. 8.

would but render them more ridiculous.

CHAP. X.

USE III.

A swasive to Contentment.

Use. III. Exhortation.

Use. III. IT exhorts us to labour for Contentation; this is that which doth beautifie and bespangle a Christian, and as a *spiritual embroidery* doth set him off in the eyes of the world.

Objection.

But me thinks I hear some bitterly complaining, and saying to me, Alas, how is it possible to be contented; the Lord *hath made my chaine heavy**, he hath cast me into a very sad condition. Ἀλλὲ μοι Αἰγίοχος Χρονίδης Ζεὺς ἄλγε ἔδωκεν.

*Lam. 3.7

Homer. Iliad 2.

Ὥς με μετ' ἀπρήκτους ἔριδας καὶ νείκεα βάλλει.

Answ.

Answ. There is no sinne, but labours

labours either to hide it ſelf under ſome maske: or if it cannot be concealed, then to vindicate it ſelf by ſome Apology. This ſin of diſcontent I finde very witty in its Apologies, which I ſhall firſt diſcover and then make a Reply. We muſt lay it down for a Rule, that diſcontent is a *ſinne*, ſo that all the pretences and Apologies wherewith it labours to juſtifie it ſelfe, are but the painting and dreſſing of a ſtrumpet.

SECT. I.

The firſt Apology that Diſcontent makes, Anſwered.

The firſt Apology which diſcontent makes is this; I have loſt a childe. *Paulina* upon the loſſe of her children, was ſo poſſeſſed with a ſpirit of ſadneſſe, that ſhe had like to have intombed her ſelf in her own diſ- 1. *Apology.*

discontent; our love to *Relation* is oftentimes more then our love to *Religion.*

1. *Reply* *Anſ.* 1. We muſt be content, not only when God gives mercies, but when he taketh them away. If we muſt *in every thing* give thanks, *1 Theſ. 5. 18. then *in nothing* be diſcontented.

2. *Reply* 2. Perhaps God hath taken away the *Ciſtern*, that he may give you the more of the *Spring*; he hath darkened the Star-light, that you may have more Sun-light. God intends you ſhall have more of himſelf, and is not he better then *ten Sons?* Look not ſo much upon a temporall loſſe, as a ſpirituall gain; the comforts of the world *runne dregges*; thoſe which come out of the Granary of the Promiſe, are purer and ſweeter.

3. *Reply* 3. Your childe was not given, but lent. I have, ſaith *Hanna, lent my ſon to the Lord**; She lent him to the Lord

* 1 Sam. 1. 21.

Lord had but lent him to her. Mercies are not entailed upon us, but lent; what a man lends, he may call for againe when he pleaſe. God hath put out a child to thee a while to nurſe, wilt thou be diſpleaſed if he takes his childe home againe? O be not diſcontented, that a mercy is taken away from you; but rather be thankfull, that it was lent you ſo long.

4. Suppoſe your childe be taken from you, either he was good or bad; if he was *Rebellious*, you have not ſo much parted with a childe, as a burden; you greive for that which might have been a greater grief to you; if he was *Religious*, then remember, he is taken *from the evil to come*, & plac'd in his centre of felicity. This lower Region is full of groſſe and hurtful vapours; how happy are thoſe who are mounted into the celeſtial Orbes! The righteous *is taken away*, in the Original

4. *Reply*

* Iſa. 57. 1

נאסף * ginall it is, he is *gathered* *; a wicked childe dying is cut off, but the pious childe is gathered. Even as we see men gather flowers, and candy them, and preserve them by them; so hath God gathered thy child as a sweet flower, that he may candy it with glory, and preserve it by him for ever. Why then should a Christian be discontented; why should he weep excessively? *Daughters of Jerusalem weep not for mee; but weep for your selves* *. So, could we hear our children speaking to us out of heaven; they would say, Weep not for us who are happy, we lie upon a soft pillow, even in the bosome of Christ; *the Prince of Peace* is embracing us and kissing us with the kisses of his lips, be not troubled at our preferment; *Weep not for us*, but weep for your selves, who are in a sinfull sorrowfull world: you are in the *valley of teares*, but we are on the *mountaines of spices*; we are

* Luk. 23. 28.

gotten

gotten to our harbour, but you are ſtill toſſing upon the waves of inconſtancy. O Chriſtian, be not *diſcontented* that thou haſt parted with ſuch a childe; but rather rejoyce that thou had'ſt ſuch a childe to part with, Break forth into thankfulneſs. What an honour is it to a Parent to beget ſuch a childe, that while he lives encreaſeth the *joy* of the glorified Angels*; and when he dies, increaſeth the *number* of the glorified Saints?

* Luk. 15. 10. *Lachrymæ pœnitentiæ ſunt vinũ Angelorũ* Bern. *ſerm* 30 *ſuper. Cant.*

5. If God hath taken away one of your children, he hath left you more, he might have ſtripped you of all. He tooke away all *Jobs* comforts, his *eſtate*, his *children*; and indeed his wife was left, but as a croſſe. Satan made a bow of this rib (as *Chryſoſtom* ſpeaks) and ſhot a tentation by her at *Job*, thinking to have ſhot him to the heart; *Curſe God and die*: but *Job* had upon him the breſt plate of *Integrity*; and though his children were taken away, yet not his graces,

5. *Reply,*

graces; ſtill he is content, ſtill he bleſſeth God, O thinke how many mercies you ſtill enjoy; yet our baſe hearts are more diſcontented at one loſſe, then thankful for an hundred mercies.

God hath plucked one bunch of Grapes from you, but how many precious Cluſters are leſt behind?

Object. *Object.* But it was my only child, the ſtaffe of my age, the ſeed of my comfort, and the only bloſſome, out of which the honour of an ancient family did grow.

Anſw. 1 *Anſw.* 1. God hath promiſed you (if you belong to him) a name, *better then of ſons and daughters* *; Is he dead that ſhould have been the monument to have kept up the name of a Family? God hath given you *a new name*, he hath written your name in the book of Life; behold your ſpiritual Heraldry; here is a name that cannot be cut off.

* Iſa. 56. 5.

2. Hath

2. Hath God taken away thy *only childe?* he hath given thee his *onely Son:* this is a happy exchange. What needs he complaine of losses that hath Christ? he is his Fathers *brightnesse**, his *riches**, his *delight**. Is there enough in Christ to delight the heart of God? and is there not enough in him to ravish us with holy delight? He is *wisdome* to teach us, *righteousnesse* to acquit us, *sanctification* to adorn us he is δῶρον βασιλικὸν, that Royal and Princely gift; he is *the bread of Angels**, the joy and triumph of Saints, he is τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσι, *all in all**; why then art thou discontented? though thy childe be lost, yet thou hast him for whom all things are losse.

* Heb. 1. 3.
* Col. 2. 9.
* Psal 42. 1
* *Christus panis angelorum.* Bern.
* Col. 3. 10

7. And lastly, let us blush to think that nature should seeme to out-strip grace. *Puluillus* an Heathen, when he was about to consecrate a Temple to *Jupiter*, and news was brought to him of the death of

7. *Reply.* Pet. Mart.

his ſonne, would not deſiſt from his enterprize, but with much compoſure of minde gave order for decent burial.

SECT. II.

The ſecond Apology anſwered.

2. Apology. 2. Apology that diſcontent makes is, I have a great part of my eſtate ſtrangely melted away, and trading begins to fail.

God is pleaſed ſometimes to bring his children very low, and cut them ſhort in their eſtate, it fares with them as with that widow who had nothing in her houſe ſave *a pot of oyle**; but be content.

* 2 King. 4. 2.

1. Reply. 1. God hath taken away your *Eſtate*, but not your *Portion*. This is a ſacred Paradox. Honour and Eſtate are no part of a Chriſtians Joynture, they are rather *acceſſaries* then *eſſentialls*; and are extrinſecall and

and forreigne, therefore the losse of these cannot denominate a man miserable, still the portion remains, *The Lord is my portion, saith my soul**. Suppose one were worth a million of money, and he should chance to lose a pin off his sleeve, this is no part of his estate, nor can we say he is undone: the losse of sublunary comforts is not so much to a Christians portion, as the losse of a pin is to a million. *These things shall be added to you**; *Adjicientur*, they shall be cast in as overplus: when a man buyes a piece of cloth, he hath an inch or two given in to the measure; now, though he lose his inch of cloth, yet he is not undone: for still the whole piece remaines: our outward estate is not so much in regard of the *portion*, as an inch of cloth is to the whole piece; why then should a Christian be discontented when the title to his spiritual treasure remains? a thief may take away all my money

* Lam 3. 24

* Mat. 6. 33

that I have about me, but not my land; ſtill a Chriſtian hath a title to the *land of promiſe*. *Mary* hath choſen the better part *which ſhall not be taken from her.*

2. *Reply.* 2. Perhaps if thy eſtate had not been loſt, thy ſoul had been loſt *; outward comforts do often quench inward heat. God cannot beſtow a jewel upon us, but we fall ſo in love with it, that we forget him that gave it; what pity is it that we ſhould commit idolatry with the creature! God is forc'd ſometimes to drain away an eſtate; the plate and jewels are often caſt over-board to ſave the paſſenger. Many a man may curſe the time that ever he had ſuch an eſtate, it hath been an *enchantment* to draw away his heart from God. Some there are that *will be rich* *, and they fall into a *ſnare**. Art thou trou-

* *Pecuniam perdidiſti, fortaſſis illa te perderet, manens.*

* 1 Tim. 6. 9

* *Aliud eſt eſſe divitem, aliud velle fieri divitem: hîc cupiditas accuſatur, non aurum.* Bede.

bled

bled that God hath prevented a ſnare? Riches are *Thornes* *: art thou angry that God hath pull'd away a thorne from thee? Riches are compar'd to *thick clay* *: Perhaps thy affections, which are *the feet of the ſoul*, might have ſtuck ſo faſt in this golden clay, that they could not have aſcended up to heaven, *be content*; if God damne up our outward comforts, it is that the ſtreame of our love may runne faſter another way.

* Mat 13 7 *Spinæ ſuffocantes & pungentes.*

* Hab. 2. 6.

3. If your eſtate be ſmall, yet God can bleſſe a little. 'Tis not how much *money* we have, but how much *bleſſing*. He that often curſeth the bags of gold *, can bleſſe the *meale in the barrel*, and the *oyle in the cruſe*. What if thou haſt not the full fleſh-pots? yet thou haſt a promiſe, *I will bleſſe her proviſion** , and then a little goes a great way; be content, thou haſt the dew of a bleſſing diſtill'd: *a dinner of green herbs*, where love is,

3. *Reply.*

* *Ex malè Quæſitis vix gaudet tertius hæres.*

* Pſal. 132. 15.

is ſweet; I may adde, where the love of God is: another may have more eſtate then you, but more care; more riches, leſſe reſt: more revenews, but withal more occaſions of expence: he hath a greater inheritance, yet perhaps God doth not give him *power to eat thereof**, he hath the *dominion* of his eſtate, not the *uſe*; he holds more, but enjoys leſſe: in a word, thou haſt leſſe gold then he, perhaps leſſe guilt*.

*Eccle.6.2

Λεπτῶς καλῶς ζῆν κρεῖσσον ἢ λαμπρῶς κακῶς. Menand.

* *Lucrum in arca, damnum in Conſcientia.* Aug. in Serm. Innocent.

4. *Reply.* 4. You did never ſo thrive in your ſpiritual trade; your heart was never ſo low as ſince your condition was low; you were never *ſo poor in ſpirit*, never *ſo rich in faith*. You did never runne the wayes of Gods *Commandments* ſo faſt as ſince ſome of your golden weights were taken off. You never had ſuch trading for heaven all your life*; this is *uberrimus*

* *Fœlix mutatio ubi Deum pro mundo accipimus, pro terra cælum.*

rimus queſtus. You did never make ſuch adventures upon the promiſe as ſince you left off your Sea-adventures. This is the beſt kinde of merchandize; O Chriſtian, thou never had'ſt ſuch incomes of the Spirit, ſuch ſpring-tydes of joy; and what though weak in eſtate if ſtrong in aſſurance? be content, what you have loſt one way, you have gain'd another.

5 Be your loſſes what they will in this kinde, remember in every loſſe there is onely a *ſuffering*, but in every diſcontent there is a *ſinne*, and one ſinne is worſe then a thouſand ſufferings. What? becauſe ſome of my *revenews* are gone, ſhall I part with ſome of my *righteouſneſſe*? ſhall my faith and patience go too? becauſe I do not poſſeſſe an eſtate, ſhall I not therefore poſſeſſe my own ſpirit? O learn to be content. 5. *Reply.*

SECT. III.

The third Apology answered.

3. *Apology.* The third Apology is, It is sad with me in my relations; where I should finde most comfort, there I have most grief. This Apology or Objection brancheth it self into two particulars, whereto I shall give a distinct Reply.

1. *Branch.* 1. My child goes on in rebellion; I fear I have brought forth a child for the Devil. It is indeed sad to think that hell should be paved with the skulls of any of our children: and certainly the *pangs of grief* which the mother hath in this kinde are worse then *her pangs of travel*; but though you ought to be humbled, yet not discontented: for consider

Reply.

1. *Reply.* 1. You may pick something out of your childes undutifulnesse; the childes

childes ſinne is ſometimes the Parents Sermon: *quod dolet, docet*: the undutifulneſſe of children to us may be a *memento* to put us in minde of our *undutifulneſſe once* to God. Time was when *we* were rebellious children; how long did our hearts ſtand out as Garriſons againſt God? how long did he parly with us, and beſeech us, ere we would yield? he walked in the tenderneſs of his heart towards us, but we walked in the frowardneſſe of our hearts towards him; and ſince grace hath been planted in our ſoules, how much of the wilde Olive is ſtill in us? how many motions of the Spirit do we daily reſiſt? how many unkindneſſes and affronts have we put upon Chriſt? Let this open a ſpring of repentance; look upon your childes rebellion, and mourne for your own rebellion.

2. Though to ſee him undutiful is your *griefe*, yet not alwayes your *ſinne* 2. *Reply*

sinne. Hath a Parent given the childe, not onely the milke of the breſt, but *the ſincere milke of the word* * ? Haſt thou ſeaſoned his tender yeares with Religious education? thou canſt do no more; Parents can onely worke knowledge, God muſt work grace; they can onely lay the wood together, it is God muſt make it burne; a Parent can onely be a guide to ſhew his childe the way to heaven, the Spirit of God muſt be a load-ſtone to draw his heart into that way. *Am I in Gods ſtead* (ſaith *Jacob*) *who hath withheld the fruit of the womb* * ? can I give children; So, is a Parent in Gods ſtead to give grace? Who can help it, if a childe having the light of conſcience, Scripture, education, theſe three Torches in his hand, yet runs wilfully into the deep ponds of ſin? Weep for thy childe, pray for him; but do not ſin for him, *by diſcontent.*

*1 Pet. 2. 2.

*Gen 30. 2.

3. Say

3. Say not, you have brought forth a childe for the Devil, God can reduce him; He hath promiſed to *turne the heart of the children to their Parents* *, and to open ſprings of grace in the *Deſert* *; When thy childe is going full-ſaile to the Devil, God can blow with a contrary wind of his Spirit, and alter his courſe. When *Paul* was breathing out perſecution againſt the Saints, and was ſailing hell-ward, God turns him another way; before he was going to *Damaſcus*, God ſends him to *Ananias*; before a Perſecutor, now a Preacher. Though our children are for the preſent fallen into the *Devils pound*, God can turne them from the power of Satan *, and bring them in at the *twelfth* houre. *Monica* was weeping for her ſon *Auguſtine*: at laſt God gave him in upon prayer, and he became a famous inſtrument in the Church of God.

3. *Reply*

* Mal. 4. 6.
* Iſa 35. 6?

* Acts. 26. 18.

2. The

2. *Branch.* 2. The second branch of the objection is; But, my husband takes ill courses; where I looked for honey, behold a sting.

Answ. 'Tis sad to have the living and the dead tied together; yet, let not your heart fret with discontent; mourne for his sinne, but do not murmur. For,

1. *Reply.* 1. God hath placed you in your relation and you cannot be discontented, but you quarrel with God. What? for every crosse that befalls us, shall we call the infinite wisdom of God in question? O the blasphemy of our hearts!

2. *Reply.* 2. God can make you a gainer by your husbands sinne; perhaps you had never been so good, if he had not been so bad. The fire burnes hotest in the coldest climate: God often by a divine *Antiperistasis* turnes the sinnes of others to our good*. and makes our *maladies* our *medicines*. The more profane the hus-

* *Etiam peccatum ipsum in bonum convertit* Aug. *in.* Rom. 8.

husband is, oft the more holy the wife growes; the more earthly he is, the more heavenly ſhe growes; God makes ſometimes the husbands ſin a ſpur to the wives grace. His exorbitances are *quaſi flabellum*, as a paire of bellowes to blow up the flame of her zeale and devotion the more.

Is it not thus? doth not thy husbands wickedneſſe ſend thee to prayer? Thou perhaps hadſt never prayed ſo much, if he had not ſinn'd ſo much: his deadneſs quickens thee the more; the ſtone of his heart is an hammer to break thy heart. The Apoſtle ſaith, *The unbelieving wife is ſanctified by the believing husband*[v]; but in this ſenſe, the believing wife is ſanctified by the unbelieving husband, ſhe growes better; his ſinne is a whetſtone to her grace, and a *medicine* for her ſecurity.

[v] 1 Cor. v. 14.

SECT.

SECT. IV.

The fourth Apology Answered.

4. *Apology* The next Apology that discontent makes, is, But my friends have dealt very unkindly with me, and proved false.

Answ. 'Tis said when a friend proves like a *Brooke in Summer* *; The Traveller being parched with heat, comes to the brooke, hoping to refresh himselfe; but the brook is dryed up: yet be content.

*Job 6.15.

1. *Reply* 1. You are not alone, others of the Saints have been betrayed by friends; and when they have leanned upon them, they have been as a *foot out of joynt*. This was true in the Type, *David** ; *It was not an enemy reproached me, but it was thou, a man, mine equall, my guide and my acquaintance; we tooke sweet counsell together*; and in the Antitype Christ, he

*Psal. 55. 12, 13.

he was betrayed by a friend; and why ſhould we thinke it ſtrange to have the ſame meaſure dealt out to us as Jeſus Chriſt had? *The ſervant is not above his Maſter.*.

2. A Chriſtian may often read his ſinne in his puniſhment; Hath not he dealt treacherouſly with God? how oft hath he grieved the Comforter, broken his vowes? and through unbelief ſided with Satan againſt God? How oft hath he abuſed love? taking the Jewels of Gods mercies, and making a golden calfe of them, ſerving his own luſts? how oft hath he made the free-grace of God, which ſhould have been a bolt to keep out ſinne, rather a key to open the door to it? theſe wounds hath the Lord received *in the houſe of his friend* *. Look upon the unkindneſſe of thy friend, and mourne for thy owne unkindneſſe againſt God; ſhall a Chriſtian condemn that in another, which he hath been too guilty of himſelf? 2. *Reply*

* Zach. 13. 6.

3. Hath

3. *Reply* 3. Hath thy friend proved treacherous? perhaps you did repose too much confidence in him. If you lay more weight upon an house then the pillars will bear, it must needs break. God saith, *Trust ye not in a* *Mica. 7.5 *friend**; perhaps you did put more trust in him, then you did dare to put in God. Friends are as *Venice-glasses*, we may use them; but if we lean too hard upon them, they will break: Behold matter of humility, but not of sullenness and discontent.

4. *Reply* 4. You have a friend in Heaven will never faile you; *There is a friend* Pro. 18.14 (saith *Solomon*) *that sticketh closer then a brother.* Such a friend is God; he is very studious and inquisitive in our behalfe; he hath a debating with himself, a consulting and projecting how he may do us good; he is the *best friend*, which may give contentment in the midst of all discourtesies of friends.

Con-

Conſider, 1. He is a *loving friend.* God is love*, hence he is ſaid ſometimes to engrave us on the *Palmes of his hand*, Iſa. 49. 16. that we may be never out of his eye, and to carry us *in his boſome*, Iſa. 40. 11. near to his heart. There is no ſtop or ſtint in his love; but as the River *Nilus*, it overflows all the banks: his love is as far *beyond* our thoughts, as it is *above* our deſerts. O the infinite love of God, in giving the Son of his love to be made *fleſh**, which was more then if all the Angels had been made *wormes*! God in giving Chriſt to us, gave his very heart to us; here is love penſill'd out in all its glory, and engraven as with the *point of a Diamond.* All other love is hatred in compariſon of the love of our friend.

* 1 John 4. 16.

Iſa. 49. 16.

Iſa. 40. 11.

* *Quantus Deus quantillus factus eſt homo?* Aug.

2. He is a *careful* friend; *He careth for you**.

* 1 Pet. 5. 7

1. He minds and tranſacts our buſineſſe as his own, he accounts his

peoples intereſts and concernments as his intereſt.

2. He provides for us, Grace to enrich us, Glory to ennoble us; It was *Davids* complaint, *No man cared for my ſoul**; a Chriſtian hath a friend that cares for him.

* Pſ. 142. 4.

* Dan. 2. 20.

3. He is a *Prudent* friend*. A friend may ſometimes erre through ignorance or miſtake, and give his friend poyſon inſtead of ſugar; but *God is wiſe in heart**. He is skilfull as well as faithful; he knows what our diſeaſe is, and what Phyſick is moſt proper to apply; he knowes what will do us good, and what wind will be beſt to carry us to heaven.

* Job 9. 4.

* Deut. 7. 9, 10.

4. He is a *Faithful* friend*; and he is faithful, 1. In his promiſes, *In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie hath promiſed**. Gods people are *children that will not lie**; but God is a God that *cannot* lie; he will not deceive the faith of his people;

* Tit. 1. 2.

* Iſa. 63. 8.

people; nay, he cannot: he is called ὁ ἀληθὴς, *the truth*; he can as well ceaſe to be God, as ceaſe to be true. The Lord may ſometimes *change* his promiſe, (as when he converts a temporal promiſe into a ſpiritual;) but he can never *break* his promiſe.

5. He is a *Compaſſionate Friend.* Hence in Scripture we read of *the earnings of his bowels**, Gods friendſhip is nothing elſe but compaſſion; for there is naturally no *affection* in us to deſire his friendſhip, nor no *goodneſſe* in us to deſerve it; the load-ſtone is in himſelf. When we were full of *blood*, he was full of *bowels*; When we were enemies, he ſent an Embaſſage of peace; When our hearts were turned back from God, his heart was turned towards us. O the tenderneſſe and ſympathy of our friend in heaven! We our ſelves have ſome relentings of heart to thoſe which are in miſery;

* Jer. 31. 20.

but it is God who begets all the mercies and bowels that are in us, therefore he is call'd *the Father of mercies**.

* 2Cor. 1. 3

6. He is a *constant friend*. *His compassions faile not**. Friends do often in adversity drop off as leaves in Autumne*. *Amici circa sartaginem*, as *Plutarch* saith; these are rather flatterers then friends. *Joab* was for a time faithful to King *Davids* house, he went not after *Absaloms* Treason, but within a while proved false to the Crown, and went after the treason of *Adonijah**; God is a friend for ever. *Having loved his own, he loved them to the end**. What though I am despised? yet God loves me: What though my friends cast me off? yet God loves me: he loves εἰς τέλος, to the end, and there is no end of that love.

* Lam. 3. 22

* *Dum fueris fœlix, multos numerabis amicos. Nubila si fuerint tempora, solus eris.*

* 1King. 1. 7.

* εἰς τέλος ἠγάπησεν. Joh. 13. 1.

This me thinks, in case of discourtesies, and unkindnesses, is enough to charm down discontent.

Sect.

SECT. V.

The fifth Apology Answered.

The next Apology is, I am under great reproaches *. Let not this discontent; For, 5 *Apology.*

1. It is a signe there is some good in thee; *Quid mali feci?* saith *Socrates*; what evil have I done, that this bad man commends me? The *applause* of the wicked usually denotes some evil, and their *censure* imports some good*. *David* wept and fasted, and that was *turned to his reproach**; as we must passe to heaven through the *pikes* of suffering, so through the clouds of Reproach. 1. *Reply*

2. If your reproach be for God, as *Davids* was, *For thy sake I have born reproach**; then it is rather matter of *triumph* then dejection: Christ doth not say, when you are re-

* *Deteriores sunt qui famam corrumpunt quàm qui prædia diripiunt.* Greg.

* Ps. 38, 20

* Ps. 69 10

2. *Reply*

* Psal. 69 7

reproached, *be diſcontented*; but χαίρετε, *Rejoyce**. Wear your Reproach as a Diadem of honour, for now *a Spirit of glory reſts upon you**. Put your reproaches into the inventory of your riches; ſo did *Moſes**. It ſhould be a Chriſtians ambition to wear his Saviours livery though it be ſprinkled with blood, and ſullied with diſgrace.

* Mat. 5. 12.
* 1 Pet. 4. 14.
* Heb. 11. 26

3. *Reply,* * *Boni per contumelias meliores exiſtunt.* Gregor. *in* Hom. 3. God will do us *good* by reproach*; as *David* ſaid of *Shimei* his curſing, *It may be the Lord will requite good for his curſing this day**; this puts us upon ſearching out ſinne. A child of God labours to read his ſin in every ſtone of reproach that is caſt at him; beſides, now we have an opportunity to exerciſe patience and humility *.

* 2 Sam. 16. 12.
* *Detractione patientia noſtra probatur.* Aug. *lib.* 3. *contra Petil.*

4. Jeſus Chriſt was content to be reproached for us; *He deſpiſed the ſhame of the Croſſe**. It may amaze us to think, that he who was God could endure to be ſpit upon, to be crowned

4. *Reply.* * Heb. 12. 2.

crowned with thornes, *in a kinde of jeere*; and when he was ready to *bow* his head upon the Crosse, to have the Jewes in scorne *wag* their head, and say, *He saved others, himselfe he cannot save.* The *shame* of the Crosse was as much as the *blood* of the Crosse; His *Name* was crucified before his *Body*. The sharp arrows of *Reproach* that the world did shoot at Christ, went deeper into his heart then the spear; His suffering was so ignominious, that as if the Sunne did blush to behold, it withdrew its bright beams, and masqued it self with a cloud; (and well it might, when the Sun of righteousnesse was in an eclipse;) all this contumely and reproach did the God of glory *endure*, or rather *despise* for us. Oh then, let us be content to have our names eclipsed for Christ; let not reproach lie at our heart, but let us binde it as a crown about our head. Alas, what is reproach? this

is

is but *ſmall ſhot*, how will men ſtand in the mouth of the Canon? thoſe who are diſcontented at a reproach, will be offended at a faggot.

5. *Reply.* 5. Is not many a man contented to ſuffer reproach for maintaining his luſt? and ſhall not we for maintaining the truth? Some *glory in that which is their ſhame** : and ſhall we be aſhamed of that which is our glory? Be not troubled at theſe petty things: he whoſe heart is once divinely touched with the loadſtone of Gods Spirit, doth account it his honour to be diſhonoured for Chriſt*; and doth as much deſpiſe the worlds cenſure, as he doth their praiſe.

*Phil. 3. 19

*Act. 15. 4

6. *Reply.* 6. We live in an Age, wherein men dare reproach God himſelfe. The *Divinity* of the Sonne of God is blaſphemouſly reproached by the *Socinian*; The bleſſed *Bible* is reproached by the *Antiſcripturiſt*, as if it

it were but a *legend of lies*, and every mans faith a fable; The *Juſtice* of God is called to the barre of Reaſon by the *Arminian*; The *Wiſdome* of God in his providential actings, is taxed by the *Atheiſt*; The *Ordinances* of God are decryed by the *Familiſt*, as being too heavy a burden for a *free-borne* conſcience, and too low, and carnal for a ſublime Seraphique ſpirit; The *Wayes* of God which have the Majeſty of holineſs ſhining in them, are calumniated by the *Profane*; The mouthes of men are open againſt God, as if he were an *hard Maſter*, and the path of Religion too ſtrict and ſevere; If men cannot give God a good word, ſhall we be diſcontented or troubled, that they ſpeak hardly of us? ſuch as labour to bury the glory of Religion, ſhall we wonder that their throats are *open ſepulchres* *, to bury our good name? Oh let us be contented while we are in Gods ſcouring houſe,

* Rom. 3. 31.

to

to have our names sullied a little; the blacker we seeme to be here, the brighter shall we shine when God hath set us upon the celestiall shelfe.

SECT. VI.

The sixth Apology answered.

6 Apology. The sixth Apology that Discontent makes, is disrespect in the world. I have not that esteem from men as is suitable to my quality and graces. And doth this trouble? Consider,

1. Reply 1. The world is an unequal Judge, as it is full of *change*, so of *partiality*. The world gives her *Respects* as she doth her *places of preferment*; more by favour often, then desert. Hast thou the ground of reall worth in thee? that is best Worth is in him that *hath* it; Honour is in him that *gives* it*: better deserve respect, and

**Honor est in bonoratie.*

and not have it; then have it, and not deserve it.

2. Hast thou grace? God respects thee, and his judgment is best worth prizing. A Beleever is a person of honour, being *borne of God*. Since thou wast *precious* in mine eys; *thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee** . Let the world think what they will of you; perhaps in their eyes you are a *castaway*; in Gods eyes a *Dove* *, a *Spouse* *, a *Jewel** : others account you the dregs & offscouring of the world*, but God will give *whole Kingdomes for your ransome**. Let this content; no matter with what oblique eyes I am looked upon in the world; if I am *rectus in curia*, God thinks well of me. 'Tis better that God approve, then man applaud. The world may put us in their *Rubrick*, and God put us in his black-book. What is a man the better that his fellow-prisoners commend him, if his Judge condemne him?

2. *Reply.*

*Isa.43 4.

*Cant.2. 14.

*Cant 5.1

*Mal.3 17

1 Cor. 4. .14

*Isa.43.3.

him? Oh labour to keep in with God, prize his love: let my fellow-subjects frowne; I am contented being a favorite of the King of heaven.

3. *Reply* 3. If we are the children of God, we must look for disrespect; a believer is *in* the world, but not *of* the world: we are here in a pilgrim condition, out of our own Countrey, therefore must not look for the respects & acclamations of the world; it is sufficient that we shall have honour in our own Countrey*; 'Tis dangerous to be the worlds favorite.

*Heb 13. 14.

4. *Reply* 4. Discontent arising from disrespect, savours too much of pride; an humble Christian hath a lower opinion of himself then others can have of him. He that is taken up about the thoughts of his sins, and how he hath provoked God, he cries out as *Agur, I am more brutish then any man**; and therefore is contented, though

*Prov. 30. 2.

though he be set *among the Dogs of the flock* *. Though he be low in the thoughts of others, yet he is thankfull, that he is not laid *in the lowest hell* *. A proud man sets an high value upon himself; and is angry with others, because they wil not come up to his price. Take heed of pride; O had others a window to look into thy brest, (as *Crates* once expressed it), or did thy heart stand where thy face doth: thou would'st wonder to have so much respect.

*Job. 30. 1.

*Ps. 86 13

SECT. VII.

The seventh Apology answered.

The next Apology is, I meet with very great sufferings for the truth *. Consider

7. *Apology*, *Scala aurea ad cœlum, sed circumseptia gladiis.*

1. Your *sufferings* are not so great as your *sinnes*; Put these two in the balance, and see which weighs heaviest

1. *Reply*

vieſt; where ſinne lies heavy, ſufferings lie light. A carnall ſpirit makes more of his ſufferings, and leſſe of his ſinnes; he looks upon one at the great end of the Perſpective, but upon the other at the little end of the Perſpective. The carnall heart cries out, Take away the *Frogs*; but a gracious heart cries, Take away the *iniquity**. The one ſaith, never any one ſuffered as I have done: but the other ſaith, never any one ſinned as I have done*.

*2 Sam. 24. 10.

*Mica. 7. 9

2. *Reply* 2. Art thou under ſufferings? thou haſt an opportunity to ſhew the valour and conſtancy of thy minde; ſome of Gods Saints would have accounted it a great favour to have been honoured with martyrdome. One ſaid, I am in priſon *till* I am in priſon, thou counteſt that a trouble which others would have worne as an enſigne of their glory.

3. *Reply.* 3. Even thoſe who have gone onely upon morall principles, have ſhewn

ſhewn much conſtancy and contentment in their ſufferings. *Curtius* being bravely mounted, and in armour, threw himſelfe into a great gulfe, that the City of *Rome* might according to the Oracle be delivered from the Peſtilence; and we having a Divine Oracle, *that they who kill the body cannot hurt the ſoul*, ſhall we not with much conſtancy and patience devote our ſelves to injuries for Religion, and rather ſuffer for the truth, then the truth ſuffer by us? The *Decii* among the Romans vowed themſelves to death, that their legions and ſouldiers might be crowned with the honour of the victory. O what ſhould we be content to ſuffer to make the truth victorious! *Regulus* * having ſworne that he would returne to *Carthage* (though he knew there was a furnace heating for him there) yet not daring to infringe his oath, he did adventure to go; we then who are Chriſtians, having made a vow

* Pet. Mart.

a vow to Christ in Baptism, and so oft renewed it in the blessed Sacrament, should with much contentation rather choose to suffer, then violate our sacred oath. Thus the blessed Martyrs, with what courage and chearfulnesse did they yield up their souls to God? and when the fire was set to their bodies, yet their spirits were not at all fired with passion or discontent. Though others hurt the *body*, let them not the *minde* through discontent; shew by your heroick courage that you are above those troubles which you cannot be without.

SECT. VIII.

The eighth Apology answered.

8 *Apology* The next Apology is, The prosperity of the wicked. *Answ.* I confesse 'tis so often, that the evil enjoy all

all the good, and the good endure all the evil. *David*, though a good man, ſtumbled at this, and had like to have fallen*; well, be contented, for remember, * Pſ 73. 2.

1. Theſe are not the only things, nor the beſt things, they are mercies without the pale; theſe are but acorns with which God feeds ſwine; you who are believers, have more choice fruit, the *Olive*, the *Pomegranate*, the fruit which grows on the *true Vine* Jeſus Chriſt; others have the fat of the earth, you have the dew of heaven; they have a South-land, you have thoſe ſprings of living water which are clarified with Chriſts blood, and indulcorated with his love. 1. *Reply.*

2. To ſee the wicked flouriſh is matter rather of *pity* then envy; 'Tis all the heaven they muſt have. *Wo to you rich men, for you have received your conſolation**. Hence it was that *David* made it his ſolemne prayer, *Deliver me from the wicked, from men* 2. *Reply.* * Luk. 6. 24 Pſa. 17. 14

of the world, which have their portion in this life, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure, Psal. 17. 14. The words (me thinks) are *Davids Letany*; from men of the world which have their portion in this life, *Good Lord deliver me.* When the wicked have eaten of their dainty dishes, there comes in a sad reckoning which will spoile all. The world is first *musical*, and then *tragical*: if you would have a man fry, and blaze in hell; let him have enough of the *fat of the earth.* O remember, for every sand of mercy that runs out to the wicked, God puts a drop of wrath into his Vial. Therefore as that souldier said to his fellow, Do you envy me my grapes? they cost me dear, I must die for them. So I say, Do you envy the wicked? alas, their prosperity is like *Hamans* banquet before execution. If a man were to be hanged, would one envy to see him walk to the gallows through plea-

pleaſant fields and fine galleries, or to ſee him go up the ladder in cloth of gold; The wicked may flouriſh in their bravery a while; but, *when they flouriſh as the graſſe, it is, that they ſhall be deſtroyed for ever**. This proud graſſe ſhall be mowen down. Whatever a ſinner enjoyes, he hath a curſe with it*; and ſhall we envy? What if poiſoned bread be given to dogs? The long furrowes in the backs of the godly have *a ſeed of bleſſing* in them; when the table of the wicked becomes a ſnare, and their honour their halter.

* Pſal. 92. 7

* Mal. 2. 2.

SECT. IX.

The ninth Apology anſwered.

9. The next Apology that diſcontent makes for it ſelf, is *the evils of the times*. The times are full of Hereſie and Impiety, and this is that which troubles me. This Apology

9. Apology.

consists of two branches, to which I shall answer in *specie*; and

1. *Branch.* The heresie of the times.

1. The times are full of Heresie. This is indeed sad, when the Divel cannot by violence destroy the Church, he endeavours to poison it; when he cannot with *Samsons* Fox-tailes set the corne on fire, then he sowes tares; as he labours to destroy the peace of the Church by *Division*, so the truth of it by *Errour*; we may cry out with *Seneca*, *Verè vivimus in temporum fœcibus*, we live in times wherein there is a fluce open to all novel opinions, and every mans *opinion* is his *Bible*. Well, this may make us mourne, but let us not murmur through discontent: Consider,

1. *Reply.*

1. Errour makes a discovery of men,

1. 1. *Bad men*; Errour discovers such as are tainted and corrupt. When the Leprosie brake forth in the forehead, then was the *Leper* discovered.

Errour

Errour is a ſpiritual Baſtard; the devil is the father, and pride the mother: you never knew an erroneous man, but he was a proud man: now, it is good that ſuch men ſhould be laid open, to the intent, firſt, that Gods righteous judgements upon them may be adored*; Secondly, that others who are free, be not infected. If a man hath the plague, it is well it breaks forth; for my part, I would avoid an Heretick as I would avoid the devil, for he is ſent on his errand. I appeale to you, if there were a Taverne in this City, where under a pretence of ſelling wine, many hogſheads of poiſon were to be ſold, were it not well that others ſhould know of it that they might not buy? it is good that thoſe who have poiſoned opinions ſhould be known, that the people of God may not come near either the ſent, or taſt of that poiſon.

* 2 Theſ. 2. 12

2. Errour is a *Touch-ſtone* to diſco- 2.

ver *good men*; it tries the gold, *There must be Heresies, that they which are* δόκιμοι *approved, may be made manifest**. Thus our love to Christ and zeale for truth doth appear. God shewes who are the living fish, *viz.* such as swim against the stream; who are the sound sheep, *viz.* such as feed in the green pastures of the Ordinances; who are the Doves, *viz.* such as live in the best aire, where the Spirit breaths; God sets a Garland of honour upon these, *These are they which came out of great tribulation**. So, these are they that have opposed the Errours of the times, these are they that have preserved the virginity of their conscience; who have kept their judgement sound, and their heart soft. God will have a Trophy of honour set upon some of his Saints, they shall be renowned for their sincerity, being like the Cypresse, *quæ viriditatem in hyeme non amittit**, which keeps its greennesse and

* 1 Cor. 11, 19.

* Rev. 7. 14

* Ambrose.

and freshnesse in the winter-season.

2. Be not sinfully discontented, for God can make the errours of the Church advantageous to truth. Thus the truths of God have come to be more beaten out and confirmed; as it is in *Law*, one man laying a false title to a piece of land, the true title hath by this meanes been the more searched into & ratified; some had never so studied to defend the truth by *Scripture*, if others had not endeavoured to overthrow it by *Sophistry*. all the mists and fogs of Error that have risen out of the bottomless pit, have made the glorious Sun *of truth* to shine so much the brighter. Had not *Arius* and *Sabellius* broached their damnable Errours, the truth of those questions about the blessed *Trinity* had never been so discussed and defended by *Athanasius*, *Augustine*, and others; had not the devil brought in so much of his 2. *Reply*

princely darkneſſe, the Champions for Truth had never runne ſo faſt to Scripture to light their Lamps. So that God who hath a *wheele within a wheele*, over-rules theſe things wiſely, and turns them to the beſt. Truth is an heavenly plant that ſettles by ſhaking.

3. *Reply.* *Etiam ramenta auri pretioſa.*

3. God raiſeth the price of his truth the more; the very ſhreds and filings of truth are venerable. When there is much counterfeit metal abroad, we prize the true Gold the more: the pure wine of truth is never more precious, then when unſound doctrines are broached and vented.

4. *Reply*

4. Errour makes us more thankful to God for the jewel of Truth. When you ſee another infected with the Plague, how thankful are you, that God hath freed you from the infection? when we ſee others have the *Leproſie in the head*, how thankful are we to God that he hath not given

given us over to believe a lie, and so be damned? It is a good use that may be made even of the Errour of the times, when it makes us more humble and thankful, adoring the free graec of God who hath kept us from drinking of that deadly poison.

2. The second branch of the Apology that discontent makes, is the *impiety of the times*. I live and converse among the profane, *O that I had wings like a Dove, that I might flie away and be at rest* *! *Answ.* It is indeed sad to be mixed with the wicked, *David beheld the transgressors, & was grieved* *, and *Lot*, (who was a bright Starre in a dark night) was *vexed*, or as the word in the Original may beare, *wearied out* *, ὑπὸ τῆς τῶν ἀθέσμων ἐν ἀσελγείᾳ ἀναστροφῆς, *with the unclean conversation of the wicked* *; he made the sinnes of *Sodom spears* to pierce his own soul; we ought (if there be any spark of divine love in us) to be very sensible of the

2. *Branch of the Apology.* The impiety of the times.

*Ps. 55.6.

*Psa. 119. 58.

* καταπονούμενος.

*2 Pet. 2.7

the ſinnes of others, and to have our hearts bleed for them; yet let us not break forth in murmuring or diſcontent, knowing that God in his providence hath permitted it, and ſurely not without ſome reaſons; For,

1. *Reply.* 1. The Lord makes the wicked an hedge to defend the godly; the wiſe God often makes thoſe who are *wicked* and *peaceable*, a meanes to ſafeguard his people from thoſe who are *wicked* and *cruell*. The King of *Babylon* kept *Jeremy*, and gave ſpecial order for his looking to, that he did want nothing*. God ſometimes makes *braZen ſinners* to be *braZen walls* to defend his people.

* Jer. 39. 11, 12.

2. *Reply.* 2. God doth interline & mingle the wicked with the godly, that the godly may be a means to ſave the wicked; ſuch is the *beauty of holineſſe*, that it hath a magnetical force in it to allure and draw even the wicked. Sometimes

times God makes a believing husband a means to convert an unbelieving wife, and *è contrà*, *What knowest thou O wife, whether thou ſhalt ſave thy husband? or how knoweſt thou, O man, whether thou ſhalt ſave thy wife**? The godly living among the wicked, by their prudent advice, and pious example have won them to the embracing of Religion; if there were not ſome godly among the wicked, how in a probable way, without a miracle, can we imagine that the wicked ſhould be converted? Thoſe who are now ſhining Saints in Heaven, ſometimes *ſerved divers luſts**. *Paul* once a perſecutor; *Auguſtine* once a Manichee; *Luther* once a Monk; but by the ſevere and holy carriage of the godly, were converted to the faith.

* 1 Cor. 7. 16.

* Tit. 3. 3.

SECT.

SECT. X.

The tenth Apology *answered.*

10. *Apology.* The next Apology that Discontent makes, is lowneſſe of parts, and gifts.

I cannot, ſaith the Chriſtian, diſcourſe with that fluency, nor pray with that elegancy as others.

1. *Reply.* *Anſw.* 1. *Grace is beyond gifts.* Thou compareſt thy grace with anothers gifts, there is a vaſt difference. Grace without gifts is infinitely better then gifts without grace; in Religion, the *vitals* are beſt; Gifts are more extrinſecal and common work of the Spirit, which is incident to reprobates; grace is a more diſtinguiſhing work, and is a jewel hung onely upon the Elect. Haſt thou the *ſeed of God*, the *holy anointing?* be content.

I. Thou

I. Thou ſayeſt, thou canſt not diſcourſe with that fluency as others.

Anſw. Experiments in Religion are beyond notions, and *impreſſions* beyond expreſſions. *Judas* (no doubt) could make a learned diſcourſe of Chriſt, but welfare the woman in the Goſpel, that felt vertue coming out of him *. A ſanctified heart is better then a ſilver tongue. There is as much difference between gifts and grace as between a Tulip painted on the wall, and one growing in the Garden.

* Luk. 8. 47

II. Thou ſayeſt, thou canſt not pray with that elegancy as others.

Anſw. Prayer is a matter more of the *heart* then the *head*. In prayer it is not ſo much *fluency* prevailes, as *fervency**, nor is God ſo much taken with the elegancy of ſpeech, as the efficacy of the Spirit. Humility is better then volubility; here the *mourner* is the *orator*, ſighes and groanes are the beſt Rhetorique.

* Jam 5. 16 δέησις ἐνεργουμένη.

2. Be

2. *Reply.* 2. Be not discontented; For God doth usually proportion a man's parts to the place where he calls him: Some are set in an higher sphere and function, their place requires more parts and abilities; but the most inferiour member is useful in its place, and shall have a power delegated for the discharge of its peculiar office.

SECT. XI.

The eleventh Apology answered.

10. *Apology.* The next Apology is, *The troubles of the Church.* Alas, my disquiet and discontent is not so much for my self, as the publick. The Church of God suffers.

Answ. I confesse it is sad, and we ought for this *to hang our harps upon* *Psal. 137. *the Willowes**; he is a wooden leg in Christs body, that is not sensible of the state of the body. As a Christian must

muſt not be *proud fleſh*, ſo neither *dead fleſh*. When the Church of God ſuffers, he muſt ſympathize; *Jeremy* wept *for the Virgin daughter of* Sion. We muſt feel our brethrens hard cords through our ſoft beds; in Muſick, if one ſtring be touched, all the reſt ſound; when God ſtrikes upon our brethren, *our bowels muſt ſound as an Harp** ; be ſenſible, but do not give way to diſcontent. For conſider,

* Il. 16. 11

1. *God ſits at the ſterne of his Church** ; Sometimes it is as a ſhip toſſed upon the waves, *O thou afflicted and toſſed** : but cannot God bring this ſhip to haven, though it meet with a ſtorme upon the Sea? The ſhip in the Goſpel was toſſed, becauſe *ſinne* was in it; but it was not overwhelmed, becauſe *Chriſt* was in it. Chriſt is in the Ship of his Church, fear not ſinking; The Churches Anchor is caſt in Heaven. Do not we think God loves his Church,

1. *Reply*
* Pſ. 46. 5.
* Iſ. 54. 11.

Church, and takes as much care of it as we can? The names of the twelve Tribes were on *Aarons breſt*, ſignifying how near to Gods heart his people are; They are his *portion* *, and ſhall that be loſt? His *glory* *, and ſhall that be finally eclipſed? No certainly. God can deliver his Church, not only *from*, but *by* oppoſition; the Churches pangs ſhall help forward her deliverance.

*Deut. 32. 9.

*Iſ. 46. 13

2. *Reply.* 2. *God hath always propagated Religion by ſufferings.* The foundation of the Church hath been laid *in blood* *, and theſe ſanguine ſhowres have ever made it more fruitful. *Cain* put the knife to *Abels* throat, and ever ſince, the Churches veins have bled; but ſhe is like the *Vine*, which by bleeding growes; and like the Palm-tree, which may have this motto, *Percuſſa reſurgit*; the more weight is laid upon it, the higher it riſeth. The holineſſe and patience of the Saints

*Sanguine fundata eſt Eccleſia, ſanguine crevit.

Saints under their persecutions, hath much added both to the *growth* of Religion, and the *Crown*. *Basil*, and *Tertul.* observe of the Primitive Martyrs, that divers of the Heathens seeing their zeal and constancy, turned Christians. Religion is that *Phenix*, which hath alwayes revived and flourished *in the ashes* of holy men. *Isaiah* sawen asunder, *Peter* crucified at *Jerusalem* with his head downwards*; *Cyprian* Bishop of *Carthage*, *Polycarp* of *Smyrna*, both martyr'd for Religion, yet evermore the Truth hath been *sealed* by blood, and gloriously dispersed; whereupon *Julian* did forbear to persecute, *non ex clementia, sed invidia*, not out of pity, but envy, because the Church grew so fast, and multiplied, as *Nazianzen* well observes.

* *Euseb.*

SECT. XII.

The twelfth Apology answered.

12. *Apology* The twelfth Apology that Discontent makes for it self, is this: It is not my trouble that troubles me, but it is my *sins* that do disquiet and discontent.

Answ. Be sure it be so; do not prevaricate with God and thy own soul: in true mourning for sinne when the present suffering is removed, yet the sorrow is not removed but suppose the Apology be real, and *sin* is the ground of your discontent. Yet I answer, a mans disquiet about sin, may be *beyond its bounds* in these three cases.

1. *Reply.* 10. *Dolor examinans.* 1. When it is *disheartning*, that is when it sets up sin above mercy. *Israel* had onely pored upon their sting, and not looked up to the *brazen*

brazen Serpent, they had never been healed. That ſorrow for ſin which drives us away from God, is not without ſinne, for there is more *deſpaire* in it then *remorſe*; The ſoul hath ſo many tears in its eyes, that it cannot ſee Chriſt. Sorrow as ſorrow doth not ſave (that were to make a Chriſt of our teares,) but is uſeful as it is preparatory in the ſoul, making ſinne *vile*, and Chriſt *precious*. Oh look up to the brazen Serpent, *the Lord Jeſus*; a ſight of his blood will revive, the medicine of his *merits* is broader then our ſore.

It is Satans policy, either to keep us from ſeeing our ſinnes; or if we will needs ſee them, that we may *be ſwallowed up of ſorrow* *, either he would *ſtupifie* us, or *affright* us; either keep the glaſſe of the Law from our eyes, or elſe penſil out our ſins in ſuch Crimſon colours, that we may ſink in the *quick-ſands* of deſpaire. * 2 Cor. 2.7

2. *Dolor impedicus.* 2. When ſorrow is *indiſpoſing*, it untunes the heart for prayer, meditation holy conference; it cloiſters up the ſoule. This is not *ſorrow*, but rather ſullenneſſe, and doth render a man not ſo much *Penitential*, as *Cinical*.

3. *Dolor intempeſtivus* 3. When it is *out of ſeaſon*; God bids us *rejoyce*, and we *hang our harps upon the Willows*; he bids us *truſt*, and we caſt our ſelves down, and are brought even to the margin of deſpaire. If Satan cannot keep us from mourning, he will be ſure to put us upon it when it is leaſt in ſeaſon.

When God calls us in a ſpecial manner to be thankful for mercy, and put on our white robes, then Satan will be putting us *into mourning*; and inſtead of a *garment of praiſe*, cloath us with a *ſpirit of heavineſſe*; ſo God loſeth the acknowledgment of a mercy, and we the comfort.

If

If thy ſorrow hath tuned and fitted thee for Chriſt, if it hath raiſed in thee high prizings of him, ſtrong hungerings after him, ſweet delight in him; this is as much as God requires, and a Chriſtian doth but ſin to vexe and torture himſelf further upon the wrack of his own diſcontent.

And thus I hope I have anſwered the moſt material Objections, and Apologies which this ſinne of Diſcontent doth make for it ſelfe. I ſee no reaſon why a Chriſtian ſhould be diſcontented, unleſſe for his Diſcontent. Let me in the next place propound ſomething which may be both as a loadſtone and a whetſtone to Contentation.

CHAP. XI.

Divine Motives to Contentment.

AND so I proceed to the Arguments, or Motives that may quicken to Contentment.

SECT. I.

The first Argument to Contentation.

The first Argument to Contentation.

1. Consider the excellency of it. Contentment is a flower that doth not grow in every garden; it teacheth a man how in the midst of want to abound. You would think it were excellent, if I could prescribe a receit, or antidote against poverty; but

but behold, here is that which is more excellent; for a man to want, and yet have enough, this alone contentment of ſpirit brings. Contentation is πᾶν φάρμακον, a remedy againſt all our troubles, a *levamen* to all our burdens; it is *the cure of care*. Contentation, though it be not properly *a Grace*, (it is rather *a diſpoſition of minde*;) yet in it there is *optimum temperamentum*, an happy temperature and mixture of all the graces: It is a moſt precious compound which is made up of *Faith, Patience, Meekneſs, Humility, &c.* which are the ingredients put into it. Now there are *in ſpecie* theſe ſeven rare excellencies in Contentment.

1. A contented Chriſtian *carries heaven about him*; For what is Heaven but that ſweet repoſe and full contentment that the ſoul ſhall have in God? in contentment there is the firſt fruits of heaven. 1. *Excellency of Contentation.*

There are two things in a contented ſpirit which makes it like Heaven.

1. *Ibi Deus.* 1. *God is there*; Something of God is to be ſeen in that heart. A diſcontented Chriſtian is like a rough tempeſtuous ſea; when the water is rough, you can ſee nothing there; but when it is ſmooth & ſerene, then you may behold your face in the water *: When the heart rageth through diſcontent, it is like a rough Sea; you can ſee nothing there, unleſſe paſſion and murmuring: there is nothing of God, nothing of heaven in that heart; but by vertue of Contentment, 'tis like the Sea when it is ſmooth and calm; there is *a face ſhining there*; you may ſee ſomething of Chriſt in that heart, a repreſentation of all the graces.

*Prov. 27 19.

2. *Ibi requies* 2. *Reſt is there.* O what a Sabbath is kept in a contented heart! What an Heaven! A contented Chriſtian is like *Noah* in the Ark; though

though the Arke were toſſed with waves, *Noah* could ſit and ſing in the Arke. The ſoule that is gotten into *the Arke of Contentment*, ſits quiet, and ſailes above all the waves of trouble; he can ſing in this ſpiritual Arke; The wheeles of the Chariot move, but the axle-tree ſtirs not; the circumference of the Heavens is carried about the Earth, but the Earth moves not out of its centre. When we meet with motion and change in the creatures round about us, a contented ſpirit is not ſtirred or moved out of its centre. The ſailes of a mill move with the wind, but the mill it ſelf ſtands ſtill; An emblem of contentment: When our outward eſtate moves with the wind of providence, yet the heart is ſetled through holy Contentment; and when others are like quick-ſilver ſhaking and trembling through diſquiet, the contented ſpirit can ſay as *David*, *O God, my heart is fixed,*

my

* Ps. 57.7 *my heart is fixed**; what is this but a piece of heaven?

2. *Excellency.* 2. Whatever is defective in the creature, is *made up in Contentment.* A Christian may want the comforts that others have, the land, and possessions; but God hath distilled into his heart that contentment which is far better; In this sense that is true of our Saviour, *He shall have in this* * Mat. 19. 29 *life an hundred fold* *. Perhaps he that ventured all for Christ, never hath his house or land again; I, but God gives him a *contented spirit*; and this breeds such joy in the soul, as is infinitely sweeter then all his houses and lands which he left for Christ. It was sad with *David* in regard of his outward comforts; he being driven (as some think) from his Kingdome; yet in regard of that sweet contentment he found in God, he had more comfort then men use to have in time of *harvest* * Psal. 4.7. *and vintage* *. One man hath house and

and lands to live upon, another hath nothing, only a ſmall trade; yet even that brings in a livelihood. A Chriſtian may have little in the world, but he drives the trade of contentment; and ſo he knows as well how to *want*, as to *abound*. O the rare *art*, or rather *miracle* of contentment! Wicked men are often diſquieted in the enjoyment of all things; the contented Chriſtian is well in the want of all things.

Queſt. But how comes a Chriſtian to be contented in the deficiency of outward comforts? *Queſt.*

Anſw. A Chriſtian finds contentment diſtilled out of the breſts of the Promiſes. He is poor in *purſe*, but rich in *Promiſe*. There is one promiſe brings much ſweet contentment into the ſoul; *They that ſeek the Lord ſhall not want any good thing**. If the thing we deſire be good for us, we ſhall have it; if it be not good, then the not having it is *Anſw.*

* Pſ. 34. 10.

good

good for us. The reſting ſatisfied with this Promiſe gives contentment.

3. *Excellency.* 3. Contentment makes a man in tune to ſerve God; it oiles the wheels of the ſoul, and makes it more agil & nimble; it compoſeth the heart, and now is fit for prayer, meditation, &c. How can he that is in a paſſion of grief, or diſcontent, *ſerve God without diſtraction**? Contentment doth prepare and tune the heart. Firſt, you prepare the Viol, and winde up the ſtrings, ere you play a fit of muſick. When a Chriſtians heart is wound up to this heavenly frame of Contentment, then it is fit for duty. A diſcontented Chriſtian is like *Saul* when the *evil ſpirit* came upon him. O what jarrings and diſcords doth he make in prayer! When an Army is put into a diſorder, now it is not fit for battell: When the thoughts are ſcattered and diſtracted about the cares of this life, a man is not

* 1 Cor. 7. 35.

not fit for devotion. Diſcontent takes the heart wholly off from God, and fixeth it upon the preſent trouble, ſo that a mans mind is not upon his *prayer*, but upon his *croſſe*.

Diſcontent doth diſjoynt the ſoul, and it is impoſſible now that a Chriſtian ſhould go ſo ſteadily, and chearfully in Gods ſervice. O how lame is his devotion! The diſcontented perſon gives God but *halfe* a duty, his Religion is nothing but *bodily exerciſe*, it wants a ſoul to animate it. *David* would not offer that to God which *coſt him nothing**; where there is too much wordly *care*, there is too little ſpiritual *coſt* in a duty. The diſcontented perſon doth his duties *by halves*; he is juſt like *Ephraim*, *a cake not turned**; he is a cake baked on one ſide; he gives God the *outſide*, but not the ſpiritual part, his heart is not in duty; he is baked on one ſide, but the other ſide dough; and

* 2 Sam. 24 24

* Hoſ 7. 8.

and what profit is there of such raw indigested services? He that gives God only the skin of worship, what can he expect more then the shell of comfort? Contentation brings the heart into frame; and then only do we give God the flower and spirits of a duty, when the soul is composed; now a Christian doth *remagere*, his heart is intense and serious. There are some duties which we cannot performe as we ought without Contentment; As,

1. *To rejoyce in God.* How can he rejoyce that is discontented? He is fitter for *Repining* then *Rejoycing*.

2. *To be thankful for mercy.* Can a discontented person be thankful? he can be *fretful*, not thankful.

*Ezr. 9 13 3. *To justifie God in his proceedings**. How can he do this who is discontented with his condition? He will sooner censure Gods wisdome, then clear

cleare his juſtice. Oh then how excellent is *Contentation*, which doth prepare, and as it were, ſtring the heart for duty? Indeed Contentment doth not only make our duties lively and agil, but *acceptable*. 'Tis this that puts beauty and worth into them; for Contentment *ſettles* the ſoul: Now as it is with *milke*, when it is always ſtirring, you can make nothing of it, but let it ſettle a while and then it turns to cream: When the heart is overmuch ſtirred with diſquiet and diſcontent, you can make nothing of thoſe duties; how thin, how fletten, and jejune are they? But when the heart is once ſetled by holy Contentment, now there is ſome worth in our duties, now they turn to cream.

4. Excellency.

4. Contentment is the ſpiritual *Arch*, or pillar of the ſoul; it fits a man to *bear burdens*; he whoſe heart is ready to ſink under the leaſt ſin, by vertue of this hath a ſpirit invincible

cible under ſufferings. A contented Chriſtian is like the Camomile, the more it is troden upon, the more it growes; as Phyſick works diſeaſes out of the body, ſo doth contentment work trouble out of the heart. Thus it argues; If I am under reproach, God can vindicate me; If I am in want, God can relieve me. *Ye ſhall not ſee wind, nor raine; yet the valley ſhall be filled with water* *. Thus holy Contentment keeps the heart from fainting; in the *Autumne* when the fruit and leaves are blown off, ſtill there is ſap in the root: When there is an autumne upon our external felicity, the leaves of our eſtate drop off, ſtill there is the ſap of Contentment in the heart; and a Chriſtian hath life inwardly, when his outward comforts do not bloſſome. The contented heart is never out of heart. Contentation is a golden ſhield, that doth beat back diſcouragements. *Humility* is like the lead

* 2 King. 3 17.

to

to the net, which keeps the ſoule down when it is riſing through paſſion; and *Contentment* is like the cork which keeps the heart up when it is ſinking through diſcouragement. Contentment is the great under-proper; it is like the *Beame* which beares whatever weight is laid upon it; nay, it is like a *Rock* that breaks the waves.

'Tis ſtrange to obſerve the ſame affliction lying upon two men, how differently they carry themſelves under it. The contented Chriſtian is like *Samſon*, that carried away the gates of the City upon his back*; he can go away with his croſſe cheerfully and makes nothing of it; the other is like *Iſſachar* couching down under his burden*: the reaſon is, the one is content, and that breeds courage; the other diſcontented, and that breeds fainting. Diſcontent ſwells the grief, and grief breaks the heart. When this ſacred ſinew of

* Judges 16. 3.

* Gen. 49. 14

Contentment begins to ſhrink, we go limping under our afflictions. We know not what burdens God may exerciſe us with, let us therefore preſerve Contentment, as is our *Contentment*, ſuch will be our *courage*. *David* with his five ſtones and his ſling defied *Goliah*, and overcame him. Get but Contentment into the ſling of your heart; and with this ſacred ſtone you may both defie the world and conquer it; you may break thoſe afflictions which elſe will break you.

5. Excellency. 5. A fifth excellency is, Contentment prevents many *ſinnes and tentations*.

1. It prevents many *ſinnes*. Where there wants Contentment, there wants no ſin; diſcontentedneſs with our condition, is a ſin that doth not go alone, but is like the firſt link of the chaine, which draws all the other links along with it. In particular, there are two ſinnes which Con-

Contentation prevents.

1. *Impatience.* Diſcontent and Impatience are two Twins; *This evil is of the Lord, why ſhould I wait any longer* *? As if God were ſo tied that he muſt give us the mercy juſt when we deſire. Impatience is no ſmall ſin; as will appear, if you conſider whence it ariſeth; As, * 2 King 6. 33

1. It is for want of faith. Faith gives a right notion of God; it is an intelligent grace; it believes that Gods wiſdome tempers, and his love ſweetens all ingredients; this works patience; *Shall I not drink the cup which my Father hath given me?* Impatience is the daughter of infidelity. If a patient hath an ill opinion of the Phyſician, & conceits that he comes to poiſon him, he will take none of his Receits. When we have a prejudice againſt God, and conceit that he comes to kill us, and undo us, then we ſtorme, and cry out through Impatience. We are like a fooliſh

man('tis *Chryſoſtoms* ſimile)that cries out, Away with the plaiſter,though it be in order to a cure; is it not better that the plaiſter ſmart a little, then the wound feſter and rankle?

2. Impatience is for want of love to God. We will beare his reproofs whom we love, not onely patiently, but thankfully. *Love* *1 Cor. 13. 5 *thinks no evil**. It puts the faireſt and moſt candid gloſſe upon the actions of a friend; *Love covers evil.* If it were poſſible for God in the leaſt manner to erre,(which were blaſphemy to think)love would cover that errour; love takes every thing in the beſt ſenſe; it makes us beare any ſtroke, *It endureth all* *1 Cor. 13 7 *things**; had we love to God, we ſhould have patience.

3. *Impatience is for want of Humility.* The impatient man was never humbled under the burden of ſinne; he that ſtudies his ſinnes, the numberleſſe number of them, how they

they are twiſted together, and ſadly accented, is patient, and ſaith, *I will bear the indignation of the Lord, becauſe I have ſinned againſt him* *. The greater noiſe drowns the leſſer; when the ſea roares, the rivers are ſtill; he that lets his thoughts expatiate about ſinne, is both ſilent and amaz'd, he wonders it is no worſe with him. How great then is this ſinne of impatience! and how excellent is *Contentation*, which is a *Superſedeas* or counterpoiſon againſt this ſinne? The contented Chriſtian beleeving that God doth all in love, is patient, and hath not one word to ſay unleſſe to juſtifie God*. That is the firſt ſin which Contentation prevents.

* Mica. 7. 9

* Pſ. 51. 4.

2. It prevents *murmuring*, a ſin which is a degree higher then the other; murmuring is a quarrelling with God, & inveighing againſt him, *They ſpake againſt God*†; the murmurer ſaith interpretatively, that God

† Numb. 21. 5.

hath not dealt well with him, and he hath deſerved better from him. The murmurer *chargeth God with folly*; This is the language, or rather *blaſphemy* of a murmuring ſpirit, God might have been a wiſer and a better God. The murmurer is a mutineer. The *Iſraelites* are called in the ſame text *murmurers & rebels* *; and is not rebellion *as the ſin of witchcraft?* Thou that art a murmurer, art in the account of God as a *Witch*, a *Sorcerer*, as one that deals with the devil. This is a ſin of the firſt magnitude; murmuring oft ends in curſing: *Micha's* mother fell to curſing, when the *talents of ſilver were taken away**. So doth the murmurer when apart of his eſtate is taken away; our *murmuring* is the devils *muſick*, this is that ſinne which God cannot bear; *How long ſhal I bear with this people that murmur againſt me**? It is a ſin which whets the ſword againſt a people, it is a land-deſtroying ſinne; *Murmur ye not*

* Numb. 17.10.

* Judg. 17. 2.

* Numb. 14.7.

as

*as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer**. 'Tis a ripening sinne. this, without Gods mercy, will hasten *Englands* funerals. O then how excellent is contentation which prevents this sinne! To be contented, and yet murmur, is a solœcism; A contented Christian doth acquiesce in his present condition, and doth not murmur, but admire. Herein appears the excellency of contentation, it is a spiritual antidote against sin. * 1 Cor. 10 10

2. Contentment prevents many temptations; Discontent is a devil that is alwayes tempting. 1. It puts a man upon *indirect means*: He that is poor and discontented, will attempt any thing; he will go to the devil for riches; he that is proud and discontented will hang himselfe, as *Achitophel* did when his counsel was rejected. Satan takes great advantage of our discontent; he loves to fish in these *troubled waters*. Dis- 1 *Tentation*

content doth both eclipſe reaſon and weaken faith; & it is Satans policy, he doth uſually break over the hedge where it is weakeſt. Diſcontent makes a breach in the ſoule, and uſually at this breach the devil enters by a tentation, and ſtormes the ſoul. How eaſily can the devil by his *Logick* diſpute a diſcontented Chriſtian into ſinne? He formes ſuch a ſyllogiſm as this. He that is in want muſt ſtudy ſelf-preſervation: But you are now in want, therefore you ought to ſtudy ſelf-preſervation Hereupon to make good his *Concluſion*, he tempts to the forbidden fruit, not diſtinguiſhing between what is *needful*, and what is *lawful*. What? ſaith he, doſt thou want alivelihood? never be ſuch a fool as ſtarve; take *the riſing ſide* at a venture, be it good or bad, *eat the bread of deceit, drink the wine of violence*. Thus you ſee how the diſcontented man is a prey to that ſad tentation, * *to ſteal, and take Gods Name*

* Pro. 30. 9

in

in vaine. Contentation is a ſhield againſt tentation; for he that is contented, knows as well how to *want*, as to *abound*.

He will not ſinne to get a living; though the *bill of fare* grows ſhort, he is content. He lives as the birds of the aire, upon Gods Providence, and doubts not but he ſhall have enough to pay for his paſſage to heaven.

2. Diſcontent tempts a man to *Atheiſm and Apoſtacie*; ſure there is no God to take care of things here below; would he ſuffer them to be in want who have *walked mournfully before him* *? ſaith Diſcontent; Throw off Chriſts livery, deſiſt from thy Religion. Thus *Jobs* wife, being diſcontented with her condition, ſaith to her husband, *Doſt thou ſtill retain thy integrity* *? as if ſhe had ſaid, Doſt thou not ſee, *Job*, what is become of all thy Religion? *Thou feareſt God and eſchewеſt evil*, and what art thou the

2 Tentation

*Mal. 3. 14

* Job 2. 9

the better? ſee how God turnes his hand againſt thee; he hath ſmitten thee in thy body, eſtate, relations, and *Doſt thou ſtill retain thy integrity?* what? ſtil devout? ſtill weep and pray before him? Thou fool, caſt off Religion, *turne Atheiſt.* Here was a ſore tentation that the Devil did hand over to *Job*, by his diſcontented wife; only his grace, as a golden ſhield, did ward off the blow from his heart, *Thou ſpeakeſt as one of the fooliſh women.* What profit is it, ſaith the diſcontented perſon, *to ſerve the Almighty?* Thoſe that never trouble themſelves about Religion, are the proſperous men, and I in the mean while ſuffer want: as good give over driving the trade of Religion, if this be all my reward. This is a ſore tentation, and oft it prevailes; Atheiſme is the fruit that grows out of the bloſſom of diſcontent.

Oh then, behold the excellency of contentment; it doth repel this ten-

tentation. If God be mine, ſaith the contented ſpirit, it is enough; though I have no lands or tenements, his ſmile makes heaven; *His loves are better then wine*; *Better is the gleanings of* Ephraim *then the vintage of Abiezer**. I have little *in hand*, but much *in hope*; my *livelihood* is ſhort, but this is his promiſe, *even eternal life**. I am purſued by *malice*; but better is perſecuted godlineſſe then proſperous wickedneſſe. Thus divine contentment is a ſpiritual antidote both againſt *ſin* and *tentation*. * Jud. 8. 2 * 1 John 2. 25

6. Contentment ſweetens every condition. Chriſt turned the water into wine, ſo Contentment turnes the water of *Marah* into ſpiritual wine. Have I but little? yet it is more then I can deſerve or challenge. This *modicum* is in mercy; 'tis the fruit of Chriſts blood; 'tis the legacy of free grace: a ſmall preſent ſent from a King is highly valued: this little I have is with a good conſcience, 6. *Excellency.*

ſcience. 'Tis not *ſtollen water*; guilt hath not muddied or poyſoned it; it runs pure. This *little* is a pledge of more; this bit of bread, is an earneſt of that bread which I ſhall eat *in the Kingdome of God*. This little water in the cruſe, is an earneſt of that heavenly *Nectar* which ſhall be diſtill'd from the *true Vine*. Do I meet with ſome croſſes? my comfort is, if they be heavy, I have not far to go; I ſhall but carry my croſs to *Golgotha*, and there I ſhall leave it; My croſſe is light in regard of the weight of glory. Hath God taken away my comforts from me? 'tis well, the Comforter ſtill abides. Thus *Contentment* as an honey-combe drops ſweetneſſe into every condition. Diſcontent is a leaven that ſowers every comfort, it puts aloes and wormwood upon the breaſt of the creature, it leſſens every mercy, it trebbles every croſſe; but the contented ſpirit ſuckes ſweetneſs from every

every flower of providence, it can make a treacle of poyſon. *Contentation* is full of *Conſolation*.

7. Contentment hath this excellency, it is the beſt *commentator* upon Providence; it makes a faire interpretation of all Gods dealings. Let the Providences of God be never ſo dark or bloody, Contentment doth conſtrue them ever in the beſt ſenſe. I may ſay of it as the Apoſtle of charity, *It thinks no evil**. Sickneſſe (ſaith Contentment) is Gods furnace, to refine his gold and make it ſparkle the more; the priſon is an Oratory, or houſe of prayer. What if God melts away the creature from me? he ſaw perhaps my heart grew too much in love with it; had I been long in that fat paſture, I ſhould have ſurfeited; and the better my eſtate had been, the worſe my ſoule would have been. God is wiſe; he hath done this, either to prevent ſome ſinne, or

7. *Excellency.*

* 1 Cor. 13

or to exerciſe ſome grace. What a bleſſed frame of heart is this? A contented Chriſtian is an Advocate for God againſt unbeliefe and impatience; Whereas Diſcontent takes every thing from God in the worſt ſenſe; it doth implead and cenſure God: This evil I feele is but a ſymptome of greater evill: God is about to undoe me; *The Lord hath brought us hither into the Wilderneſſe to ſlay us* *. The contented ſoul takes all well; and when his condition is never ſo bad, he can ſay, *Yet God is good* *.

* Numb. 20 4.

* Pſ. 73. 1.

SECT. II.

The ſecond Argument to Contentation.

* *O fortunatos nimium, bona ſi ſua nôrint.* Virg.

The ſecond Argument or Motive to Contentment is, a Chriſtian hath that which may make him content*.

1. Hath

1. Hath not God given thee Christ? in him there are *unsearchable riches**; He is such a golden *mine* of wisdome and grace, that all the Saints and Angels can never dig to the bottome; as *Seneca* said to his friend *Polybius**, never complain of thy hard fortune as long as *Cæsar* is thy friend: so I say to a Beleever, never complaine as long as Christ is thy friend; He is an enriching pearle, a sparkling Diamond, the infinite lustre of his merits makes us shine in Gods eyes*; in him there is both *fulnesse* and *sweetnesse*; he is *ineffabile bonum* *. Scrue up your thoughts to the highest ἄκρον and pinacle, stretch them to the utmost period, let them expatiate to their full latitude and extent; yet they fall infinitely short of those ineffable and inexhaustible treasures which are locked up in Jesus Christ: and is not here enough to give the soule content? A Christian that wants *ne-*

* Eph. 3. 1.

* *Tas tibi: non est de fortuna conqueri, salvo Cæsare.* Sen.

* Eph. 1. 7

* Aug.

cessaries,

ceſſaries, yet having Chriſt, he hath *the one thing needful**.

* *Qui habet habentem omnia, habet omnia*

2. Thy ſoul is exerciſed and enamell'd with the graces of the Spirit, and is not here enough to give contentment? Grace is of a divine birth; it is the new plantation; it is the flower of the heavenly Paradiſe; 'tis the embroydery of the Spirit, 'tis *the ſeed of God**; 'tis *the ſacred unction*; 'tis Chriſts portraiture in the ſoule; 'tis the very foundation on which the ſuperſtructure of glory is laid. O, of what infinite value is Grace! What a Jewel is Faith! well may it be call'd *precious* Faith*. What is love, but a divine ſparkle in the ſoule? A ſoul beautified with grace, is like a roome richly hung with Arras, or Tapeſtry, or the Firmament beſpangled with glittering Starres. Theſe are the *true riches**, which cannot ſtand with reprobation; and is not here enough to give the ſoul *Contentment*? What

* 1 Joh. 3. 9
1 Joh 2. 27

* 2 Pet. 1. 1.

* Luk. 16. 11

are

are all other things but like the wings of a butterfly, curiously painted: but they defile our fingers. Earthly riches, saith *Augustine*, are full of poverty *; so indeed they are. For, 1. They cannot enrich the soul; Often-times under silken apparel, there is a thred-bare soul. 2. These are corruptible: *Riches are not for ever*, as the Wise man saith *. Heaven is a place where gold and silver will not go; a Beleever is rich *towards God* *, why then art thou discontented? hath not God given thee that which is better then the world? What if he doth not give thee the box, if he gives thee the Jewel? What if he denies thee farthings, if he pays thee in a better coine? he gives thee gold, *viz.* spiritual mercies. What if the *water in the bottle* be spent? thou hast enough in the fountain; What need he complain of the worlds *Emptinesse* that hath Gods *Fulnesse*? The Lord is *my portion*, saith

* *Divitiæ corporales paupertatis plenæ sunt.* Aug.

* Prov. 27. 24

* Luk. 12. 21.

Psal. 16. 5.

ſaith *David*, then let the lines fall where they will, in a *ſick-bed*, or *priſon*; I will ſay, *The lines are fallen unto me in pleaſant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.* 3. Art thou not heire to all the promiſes? haſt thou not a reverſion of heaven? when thou letteſt go thy hold of natural life, art thou not ſure of eternal life? hath not God given thee the earneſt, and firſt-fruits of glory? is not here enough to work the heart to Contentment?

What though ſome have a fraught
Of Cloves, and Nutmegs and in Cinamon ſaile?
If thou haſt wherewithal to ſpice a draught;
When griefs prevaile,

Herbe ts Poems.

And for the future time art heir
To th' Ile of ſpices; is't not fair?

SECT.

SECT. III.

The third Argument to Contentation.

The third Argument is, *Be content*, for else we confute our own prayers; We pray, *Thy will be done*; It is the will of God that we should be in such a condition; he hath decreed it, and he sees it best for us: Why then do we murmur, and are discontented at that which we pray for? either we are not in good earnest in our prayer, which argues *hypocrisie*, or else we contradict our selves, which argues *folly*.

SECT. IV.

The fourth Argument to Contentation.

The fourth Argument to Con-

tentment is, becauſe now God hath his end, and Satan miſſeth of his end.

1. *God hath his end.* Gods end in all his croſſe providences, is to bring the heart to ſubmit and be content, and indeed this pleaſeth God much, he loves to ſee his children ſatisfied with that portion he doth carve, and allot them. It contents him to ſee us contented: Therefore let us acquieſce in Gods Providence; Now God hath his end.

2. *Satan miſſeth of his end.* The end why the Devil (though by Gods permiſſion) did ſmite *Job*, in his body and eſtate, was to perplex his minde; he did vex his *body* on purpoſe, that he might diſquiet *his ſpirit*. He hoped to bring *Job* into a fit of diſcontent, and then, that he would in a paſſion break forth againſt God: but *Job* being ſo well contented with his condition, as that he falls *to bleſſing of God*, he did now diſappoint Sa-

Satan of his hope. *The Devil ſhall caſt ſome of you into priſon**. Why doth the devil throw us into priſon? It is not ſo much the hurting our body, as the moleſting our minde that he aimes at; he would imprisonment our *Contentment*, and diſturbe the regular motion of our ſoules; this is his deſigne: 'tis not ſo much the putting us into a *priſon*, as the putting us into a *paſſion*, that he attempts; but by holy contentation, Satan loſeth his prey, he miſſeth of his end. The devil hath oft deceived us; the beſt way to deceive him, is by *contentation* in the midſt of *tentation*; our contentment will diſcontent Satan. Oh, let us not gratifie our enemy. Diſcontent is the Devils *delight*; now it is as he would have it, he loves to warme himſelfe at the fire of our paſſions. *Repentance* is the joy *of the Angels*, and *diſcontent* is the joy *of the Devils*: As the Devil danceth at diſcord, ſo he ſings

* Rev. 2. 10

at diſcontent. The fire of our paſſions makes the devil a bon-fire; 'tis a kinde of heaven to him to ſee us torturing our ſelves with our own troubles; but by holy Contentment we fruſtrate him of his purpoſe, and do as it were, put him out of countenance.

SECT. V.

The fifth Argument to Contentation.

The next Argument is, by contentment a Chriſtian gets a victory over himſelfe: For a man to be able to rule his own ſpirit *, this of all others the moſt noble conqueſt*. Paſſion denotes weakneſſe; to be diſcontented is ſutable to *fleſh* and *blood*, but to be in every ſtate content; reproached, yet *content*; impriſoned, yet *content*; this is above nature; this is ſome of that holy valour

* *Fortior eſt qui ſe quàm qui fortiſſima vincit mœnia, &c*

* Prov. 16. 32

lour and chivalry, which onely a divine ſpirit is able to infuſe. In the midſt of the affronts of the world to be patient, and the changes of the world to have the ſpirit calmed; this argues μεγαλόψυχον θύμον, as *Homer* ſpeaks; this is a conqueſt worthy indeed of the Garland of honour. Holy *Job* deveſted and turned out of all, leaving his *Scarlet*, and embracing the *Dung-hill*, (a ſad cataſtrophe,) yet he had learned Contentment. 'Tis ſaid, *He fell upon the ground and worſhipped* *. One would have thought he ſhould have fallen upon the ground and *blaſphemed*; no, he fell and *worſhipped*. He adored Gods juſtice and holineſſe; behold the ſtrength of grace; here was an humble ſubmiſſion, yet a noble conqueſt; he got the victory over himſelf. 'Tis no great matter for a man to yeild to his own paſſions, this is facile and fœminine; but to content himſelf in denying of himſelf, this is ſacred.

* Job 1.20

SECT. VI.

The sixth Argument to Contentation.

The sixth great Argument to work the heart to Contentment, is the consideration that all Gods providences, how crosse or bloody soever, shall do a Beleever good; *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God*. Not onely *all good things*, but *all evil things* work for good; and shall we be discontented at that which works for our good? Suppose our troubles are twisted together, and sadly accented, as the Poet describes it;

* Rom. 8. 28

πάντα συνεργεῖ εἰς τὸ ἀγαθὸν

Littora quot conchas, quot amœna Rosaria flores,
Quótve saporiferum grana papaver habet,
Sylva feras quot alit, quod piscibus unda natatur,

Et

Et tenerum pennis aëra pulsat avis;
Tot premor adversis, &c. Ovid.

What if ſickneſſe, poverty, reproach, Law-ſuits, &c. do unite and muſter their forces againſt us? All ſhall work together, for good; our *maladies* ſhall be our *medicines*: and ſhall we repine at that which ſhall undoubtedly do us good? *Unto the upright there ariſeth light in darkneſſe.** Affliction may be baptiz'd *Marah*, 'tis bitter, but *Phyſical*. Becauſe this is ſo full of comfort, and may be a moſt excellent *Catholicon* againſt diſcontent; I ſhall a little expatiate. * Pſ. 112. 4

Queſt. It will be enquired how the evils of affliction work for good? *Queſt.*

R. Several wayes. *Anſw.*

1. They are *diſciplinary*, they teach us*. The Pſalmiſt having very elegantly deſcrib'd the Churches trouble, *Pſal.* 74. prefixeth this title to the *Pſalme*, משכיל, which ſignifies * *Schola crucis eſt ſchola lucis.*

nifies *a Pſalme giving inſtruction*; that which *ſeals up inſtruction*, works for good. God puts us ſometimes under the *black rod*; but it is *virga diſciplinaris*, a rod of diſcipline; *Hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it* *. God makes our *Adverſity*, our *Univerſity*: Affliction is a *Preacher*; *Blow the trumpet in* Tekoah, *Jer. 6.1.* The Trumpet was to preach to the people, as appeares, *verſe 6. Be thou inſtructed, O Jeruſalem.* Sometimes God ſpeaks to the Miniſter to lift up his voice like a *Trumpet* *; and here he ſpeaks to the Trumpet, to lift up its voice like a *Miniſter*. Afflictions teach us.

* Mica 6.9

* Jer. 6.1.

* Iſa. 58.1.

1. *Humility*: commonly proſperous, and proud; *corrections* are Gods *corroſives* to eat out the proud fleſh. Jeſus Chriſt is *a Lily of the vallies* *, he dwells in an humble heart; God brings us into the valley of teares, that he may bring us into the valley of humility; *Remembring*

* Cant. 2.1

*bring my affliction, the wormwood and the gall; my ſoul hath them ſtill in remembrance, and is humbled in me** ; When men are grown high, God hath no better way with them, then to brew them a *cup of wormwood.* Afflictions are compared to *thorns**. Gods thornes are to prick the bladder of pride: ſuppoſe a man runne at another with a ſword to kill him, accidentally; it only lets out his impoſtume, this doth him good. Gods ſword is to let out the impoſtume of pride; and ſhall that which makes us *humble*, make us diſcontentd?

* Lam. 3. 19, 20.

* Hoſ. 2. 8.

2. Afflictions teach us Repentance, *Thou haſt chaſtiſed me, & I was chaſtiſed. I repented; and after I was inſtructed I ſmote upon my thigh, &c.** Repentance is the precious fruit that grows upon the *Croſſe.* When the fire is put under the Still, the water drops from the Roſes: fiery afflictions makes the waters of Repentance drop and diſtill from the eyes,

* Jer. 31. 18, 19

eyes, and is here any cause of discontent.

3. Afflictions teach us to pray better*, *They poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them**, Before, they would *say* a prayer; now they *poured* out a prayer; *Vigilabat in cete, qui sterebat in navi*, Jonah was asleep in the ship, but awake and at prayer in the *Whales belly*. When God puts under the firebrands of affliction, now our hearts boile over the more; God loves to have his children *possessed* with a *spirit of prayer*. Never did *David the sweet singer of Israel* tune his Harp more melodiously; never did he pray better then when he was *upon the waters*. Thus afflictions do *indisciplinæ*, and shal we be discontented at that which is for our good?

* *Mala quæ hîc nos premunt, ad Deum confugere faciunt.* Greg.

* Isa. 26. 16

2. Afflictions are *probatory**. Gold is not the worse for being tried, or corne for being fanned. Affliction is the touchstone of sincerity, it tries

* Psal. 66. 10, 11.

tries what mettal we are made of; affliction is Gods *fan* and his *sieve*. 'Tis good that men be known; some serve God for a *livery*, they are like the fisherman that makes use of his net, onely to catch the fish: So they go a fishing with the net of Religion, onely to catch preferment; Affliction discovers these. The *Donatists* went to the *Gothes*, when the Arians prevailed; Hypocrites will not faile in a storme, true grace holds out in the *winter season*. That is a *precious faith*, which, like the star, shines brightest in the darkest night. 'Tis good that our graces should be brought to a trial; thus we have the comfort, and the Gospel the honour; and why then discontented?

3. Afflictions they are *expurgatory*; these evils work for good, because they work out sinne; and shall I be discontented at this? What if I have more *trouble*, if I have lesse *sin*? The brightest day hath its clouds, the purest

pureſt gold its droſſe, the moſt refined ſoul hath ſome lees of corruption. The Saints loſe nothing in the furnace, but what they can well ſpare, *their droſſe*; is not this for our good? why then ſhould we murmur?

*Luke 12. 49. *I am come to ſend fire on the earth* *. *Tertullian* underſtands it of the fire of *affliction*. God makes this like the fire of the three children, which burned only their bonds, and ſet them at liberty in the furnace: So the fire of affliction ſerves to burn the bonds of iniquity. *By this therfore ſhall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this is all the fruit, to take away* *Iſa. 27. 9. *his ſinne* *. When affliction or death comes to a wicked man, it takes away *his ſoule*; when it comes to a godly man, it onely takes away his *ſinne*: is there then any cauſe why we ſhould be diſcontented? God ſteeps us in the briniſh waters of affliction, that he may take out our

1 Cor. 3. 9 ſpots. Gods people are his husbandry;

ry; the ploughing of the ground kills the weeds, and the harrowing of the earth breaks the hard clods: Gods ploughing of us by affliction, is to kill the weeds of ſinne; his harrowing of us, is to break the hard clods of impenitency, that the heart may be the fitter to receive the ſeeds of grace; and if this be all, why ſhould we be diſcontented?

4. Afflictions do both exerciſe and encreaſe grace.

Firſt, they *exerciſe* grace: affliction doth breath our graces? every thing is moſt in its excellency, when it is moſt in its exerciſe. Our grace, though it cannot be dead, yet it may be *aſleep*, & hath need of awakening. What a dull thing is the fire when it is hid in the embers, or the Sunne when it is maſqued with a cloud? a ſick man is *living*, but not *lively*; afflictions quicken and excite grace. God doth not love to ſee grace in the eclipſe. Now faith puts forth its pureſt

pureſt and moſt noble acts in times of affliction: God makes the *fall of the leaf* the *ſpring* of our graces. What if we are more *paſſive*, it grace be more active.

2. Afflictions do *encreaſe* grace: as the winde ſerves to encreaſe & blow up the flame; ſo do the windy blaſts of affliction augment & blow up our graces: grace ſpends in the furnace, but it is like the *widows oyle in the cruſe*, which did encreaſe by pouring out. The torch when it is beaten, burns brighteſt, ſo doth grace when it is exerciſed by ſufferings. Sharp froſts nouriſh the good corne, ſo do ſharp afflictions grace; ſome plants grow better in the ſhade then in the Sun; as the *Bay* and the *Cypreſſe*. The ſhade of adverſity is better for ſome then the Sun-ſhine of proſperity. *Naturaliſts* obſerve, that the *Colewort* thrives better when it is watered with ſalt water then with freſh: So do ſome thrive better in the ſalt water

of

of afflictions, and shall we be discontented at that which makes us grow and flourish more?

These afflictions do bring more of Gods immediate presence into the soul. When we are most afflicted, we shall be most assisted; *I will be with him in trouble**. It can not be ill with that man with whom God is by his powerful presence in supporting, and his gracious presence in sweetning the present trial. God will be with us in trouble, not only to *behold* us, but to *uphold* us, as he was with *Daniel* in the *Lyons den*, and the three children *in the fiery oven*. What if we have more trouble then others, if we have more of God with us then others have? we never have sweeter smiles from Gods face then when the world begins to look strange, *Thy Statutes have been my songs*, where? not when I was upon the throne, but *in the house of my pilgrimage**. We read, *The Lord was not in the winde*, not

* Ps. 91. 15

* Psal. 119. 54.

* 1 King. 19. 11. *nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire**; but in a metaphorical and ſpiritual ſenſe: when the winde of affliction blows upon a Beleever, God is in the wind; when the fire of affliction kindles upon him, God is in the fire, *viz.* to ſanctifie, to ſupport, to ſweeten. If God be with us, the furnace ſhall be turned into a feſtival, the priſon into a Paradiſe, the earthquake into a joyful dance. Oh why ſhould I be diſcontented, when I have more of Gods company?

6. Theſe evils of affliction are for good, as they bring with them Certificates of Gods love, and are evidences of his ſpecial favour. Affliction is the Saints livery, 'tis a badge and cognizance of honour, That the God of glory ſhould look upon a worm, and take ſo much notice of him, as to afflict him rather then loſe him, is an high act of favour. Gods rod is *Sceptrum Regale*; a *Scepter of dignity*. *Job* calls Gods

Gods afflicting of us, *his magnifying* of us *. Some mens prosperity hath been their shame, when others affliction hath been their crown. *Job. 7. 17

7. These afflictions work for our good, because they work for us *a far more exceeding weight of glory** That which works for my glory in heaven, works for my good; we do not read in Scripture that any mans honour and riches do work for him *a weight of glory*, but afflictions do; and shall a man be discontented at that which works for his glory? The heavier the weight of affliction, the heavier the weight of glory; not that our sufferings do merit glory, (as the Papists do wickedly glosse;) but though they are not *causa*, they are *via*, they are not the cause of our crown, yet they are the way to it, and God makes us as he did our Captain, *perfect through sufferings** ; and shall not all this make us contented with our condition? Oh I beseech you, *2 Cor. 4 7. 1

*Heb. 2. 10

look not upon the *evil* of affliction but the *good*. Afflictions in Scripture are called *visitations* *, the word in the Hebrew פקד, to *visit*, is taken in a *good* sense as well as a *bad*: Gods afflictions are but *friendly visits*; behold here Gods rod like *Aarons rod* blossoming, and *Jonathans rod*, it hath honey at the end of it. Poverty shall starve our sinnes*; the sickness of the body shall cure a sinsick soul: O then in stead of murmuring and being discontented, *blesse the Lord*, hadst thou not met with such a rub in the way, thou mightest have gone to hell and never stopp'd.

* Jcb. 7. 18

* *Felix paupertas, beata miseria.*

SECT. VII.

The seventh Argument to Contentation.

The next Argument to Contentment is, consider the evil of discontent,

tent. Male-content hath a mixture of grief and anger in it and both these must needs raise a storm in the soul. Have you not seen the posture of a sick man? sometimes he will sit upon his bed, by and by he will lie down, and when he is down, he is not quiet; first he turns on one side, and then on the other, he is restlesse: this is just the embleme of a discontented spirit, the man is not sick, yet he is never well; sometimes he likes such a condition of life, and when he hath it, yet he is not pleased, he is soon weary; and then another condition of life: this is *an evil under the Sun.*

Now the evil of discontent appears in three things.

1. The *sordidnesse* of it, it is unworthy of a Christian. 1. *Evil of discontent.* 1.

First, it is unworthy of his profession. It was the saying of an Heathen; Bear thy condition quietly, *nosce te esse hominem*, know thou art

* *Fer man-suete fortunam tuam, noſce te eſſe hominem.* Tull

*a man**. So I ſay, Bear thy condition contentedly, *noſce te eſſe Chriſtianum*, know thou art *a Chriſtian*. Thou profeſſeſt to live by faith; what, and not content? Faith is a grace that doth ſubſtantiate *things*

*Heb. 11. 1 *not ſeen**, faith looks beyond the creature, it feeds upon promiſes, faith lives not *by bread alone*. When the water is ſpent in the *bottle*, faith knowes whither to have recourſe; now to ſee a Chriſtian dejected in the want of viſible ſupplies and recruits, where is faith? Oh, ſaith one, my eſtate in the world is down. I, and which is worſe, thy faith is down. Wilt thou not be contented, unleſſe God let down the veſſel to thee, as he did to *Peter*, wherein were all manner of *beaſts of the earth*,

*Act. 10. 12 *and fowls of the aire**? muſt you have firſt and ſecond courſe? This is like *Thomas*, *Unleſſe I put my finger into the print of the nailes, I will not be-*

* Johu 20. 25 *lieve**. So, unleſſe thou haſt a ſenſible

ſible feeling of outward comforts, thou wilt not be content. True faith will *truſt* God where it cannot *trace* him, and will adventure upon Gods *bond* though it hath nothing in view. You who are diſcontented becauſe you have not all you would, let me tell you either your faith is a *non-entity*, or at beſt but an *embrio*; 'tis a *weak faith* that muſt have ſtilts and crutches to ſupport it. Nay, diſcontent is not only below faith, but below reaſon; why are you diſcontented? is it becauſe you are diſpoſſeſſed of ſuch comforts? well, and have you not reaſon to guide you? doth not reaſon tell you that you are but *tenants at will?* and may not God turn you out when he pleaſe? You hold not your eſtate *jure*, but *gratis*; not by a juridical right, but upon favour and courteſie.

2. It is unworthy of the *relation* we ſtand in to God; a Chriſtian is inveſted with the title and priviledge

*Eph. 1. 5. of *ſonſhip** ; he is an heir of the promiſe: Oh conſider the lot of free-grace is fallen upon thee, thou art nearly allied to Chriſt, and of the blood royal; thou art advanced, in ſome ſenſe, above the Angels; *why then art thou, being the Kings Sonne, leane from day to day?* 2 Sam. 13. 4. Why art *thou* diſcontented? Oh how unworthy is this? as if the heire to ſome great Monarch ſhould go pining up and down becauſe he may not pick ſuch a flower.

*2 Sam. 13

The ſecond evil of diſcontent.

2. Conſider the *ſinfulneſſe* of it, which appears in three things,

The cauſes
The concomitants } of it.
The conſequences

1. It is ſinfull in the *cauſes*; which are theſe.

1.

1. *Pride.* He that thinks highly of his deſerts, uſually eſteemes meanly of his condition; a diſcontented man

man is a proud man, he thinks himselfe *better* then others; therefore findes fault with the wisdom of God that he is not *above* others *. Thus the thing *formed* saith to him that *formed* it, *Why hast thou made me thus**? Why am I not higher? Discontents are nothing else but the æstuations and boilings over of pride.

* *Nec quenquam jam ferre potest Cæsarve priorem, Pompeiusve parem.*—— Lucan. l. 1. Pharsal.

* Rom. 9 20.

2. The second cause of discontent is envy which *Augustine* calls *vitium diabolicum*, the sinne of the devil; Satan envied *Adam* the glory of Paradise, and the robe of innocency: he that envies what his neighbour hath, is never contented with that portion which Gods providence doth parcel out to him*; as envy stirs up *strife*, (this made the Plebeian faction so strong amongst the *Romans*) so it creates *discontent*; the envious man looks so much upon the blessings which another enjoys, that he

* *Fertilior seges est alienis semper in agris, Vicinumq; pecus grandius uber habet.* Ovid.

he cannot ſee his own mercies, and ſo doth continually vex and torture himſelf. *Cain* envied that his brothers ſacrifice was accepted, and his rejected, hereupon he was diſcontented, & preſently murderous thoughts began to ariſe in his heart.

3. The third cauſe is *Covetouſneſſe*. This is a radical ſin. Whence are vexing Law ſuits, but from diſcontent? and whence is diſcontent, but from covetouſneſſe? *Covetouſneſſe* and *contentedneſſe* cannot dwell in the ſame heart. *Avarice* is an *heluo*, that is never ſatisfied. The covetous man is like *Behemoth*; *behold, he drinketh up a river, he truſteth that he can draw up* Jordan *into his mouth* *. There are four things (ſaith *Solomon*) ſay, *It is not enough.* I may adde a fifth, *The heart of a covetous man*, he is ſtill craving. Covetouſneſſe is like a Wolf in the breſt, which is ever feeding; and becauſe a man is not ſatisfied, he is never content.

* Job. 40. 23.

4. The

4. The fourth cauſe of Diſcontent is *Jealouſie*, which is ſometimes occaſion'd through melancholly, and ſometimes miſapprehenſion. The ſpirit of jealouſie cauſeth *this evil ſpirit*. Jealouſie *is the rage of man* *: and oft, this is nothing but *ſuſpicion* and *phanſie*, yet ſuch as creates real diſcontent. * P. 06.34

5. The fifth cauſe of Diſcontent is *diſtruſt*, which is a great degree of Atheiſme. The diſcontented perſon is ever diſtruſtful. *The bill of proviſion* growes low; I am in theſe ſtraits and exigencies, can God help me? *Can he prepare a table in the wilderneſſe?* ſure he cannot. My eſtate is exhauſted, can God recruit me? My friends are gone, can God raiſe me up more? ſure the arm of his power is ſhrunk. I am like the *dry fleece*, can any water come upon this fleece? *If the Lord would make windows in heaven, might this thing be* *? Thus *the Anchor of hope*, and * 1 King. 7. 2

the

the ſhield of faith being caſt away, the ſoul goes pining up and down

Diſcontent is nothing elſe but the *Echo* of unbelief: and remember *diſtruſt* is worſe then *diſtreſſe*.

2. Diſcontent is evil in the concomitants of it, which are two.

1. Diſcontent is joyned with a *ſullen melancholly*; A Chriſtian of a right temper, ſhould be ever chearful in God; *Serve the Lord with gladneſs**. A ſigne the oyle of grace hath been poured into the heart, when *the oyle of gladneſs* ſhines in the countenance. Chearfulneſs credits Religion; how can the diſcontented perſon be cheerful? Diſcontent is a dogged, ſullen humour; becauſe we have not what we deſire, God ſhall not have a good word or look from us; as the Bird in the cage, becauſe ſhe is pent up, and cannot flie in the open aire, therefore beats her ſelf againſt the cage, and is ready to kill her ſelf. Thus that peeviſh Pro-

* Pſ. 100. 2.

phet

phet; *I do well to be angrie to the death*". *Jonah. 4.

2. Discontent is accompanied with *unthankfulness*; because we have not all we desire, we never minde the mercies which we have: we deal with God as the widow of *Sarepta* did with the prophet; the Prophet *Elijah* had been a means to keep her alive in the famine; for it was for his sake, that her *meale in the barrel* and her *oyle in the cruse* failed not; but assoon as ever her sonne dies, she falls into a passion, and begins to quarrel with the Prophet; *What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? art thou come to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son* *? So ungratefully do we deal with God: we can be content to receive mercies from God; but if he doth crosse us in the least thing, then through discontent, we grow techy and impatient, and are ready to flie upon God; Thus God loseth all his mercies*, * 1 Kings 17, 18.

cies *. We read in Scripture of the *thankoffering* *. The discontented person cuts God short of this; the Lord loseth his *thank-offering*. A discontented Christian repines in the midst of mercies, as *Adam*, who sin'd in the midst of *Paradise*. Discontent is a Spider that sucks the poyson of unthankfulnesse out of the sweetest flower of Gods blessings; and by a devilish chymistry extracts dross out of the most refined Gold. The discontented person thinks every thing he doth for God too much, and every thing God doth for him too little. O what a sin is unthankfulnesse *! it is an accumulative sinne, What *Cicero* saith of *Parricide* *, I may say of *Ingratitude*; there are many sinnes bound up in this one sinne; it is a voluminous wickednesse; and how full of this sinne is *Discontent*? A discontented Christian, because he hath not all he would, therefore dishonours

* Φαῦλος ἀνὴρ πίθος ἐστὶ τετρημμένος, εἰς ὃν ἁπάσας. Ἀντλῶν τὰς χάριτας εἰς κενὸν ἐξεχέας. Lucian. Epigr. 2 Chron. 29.30

* *Ingratus vitandus est ut dirũ scelus, nec cogitari pestilentius potest: nam tellus ipsa fœdius nihil creat* Pet. Crinitus. *lib.* 2. Poem.

* *Qui occidit patrem plurima committit peccata in uno.*

nours God with the mercies which he hath. God made *Eve* out of *Adams* rib, to be an *helper* (as the Father ſpeaks;) but the Devil made an arrow of this rib, and ſhot *Adam* to the heart: So doth diſcontent take the rib of Gods mercy and ungratefully ſhoot at him; Eſtate, Liberty ſhall be employed againſt God. Thus it is often-times. Behold then how Diſcontent and Ingratitude are interwoven and twiſted one within another: thus diſcontent is ſinful in its concomitants. Chryſoſt. 1

3. It is ſinful in its *Conſequences* which are theſe; 3. *Diſcontent is ſinful, in its conſequences.*

1. It makes a man very unlike the Spirit of God. The ſpirit of God is a *meek Spirit*. The Holy Ghoſt deſcended in the likeneſs of a *Dove**. A Dove is the embleme of meekneſſe; A diſcontented ſpirit is not a meek ſpirit. 1. * Mat. 3. 6

2. It makes a man like the Devil. The Devil being ſwell'd with the 2.

poyſon

poiſon of envy and malice. is never content: Juſt ſo is the Male-content. The Devil is an unquiet ſpirit, he is ſtill *walking about**; 'tis his reſt to be walking. And herein is the diſcontented perſon like him; for he goes up and down vexing himſelfe, *Seeking reſt and finding none*; he is the Devils picture.

*1 Pet. 5. 8

3. Diſcontent disjoynts the ſoul, it untunes the heart for duty; *Is any man afflicted let him pray**. But, is any man *diſcontented?* how ſhall he pray? *Lift up pure hands without wrath**. Diſcontent is full of wrath and paſſion; The Male-content cannot lift up pure hands; he lifts up *leprous hands*, he poiſons his prayers; will God accept of a poiſon'd ſacrifice? *Chryſoſtome* compares prayer to a fine Garland; Thoſe, ſaith he, that make a Garland, their hands had need be clean; Prayer is a precious Garland, the heart that makes it had need be clean, Diſcontent throws

3.

* Jam. 5. 13.

*1 Tim. 5. 8

poiſon

poyſon into the ſpring, (which was death among the *Romans*;) Diſcontent puts the heart into a diſorder and mutiny, and ſuch a one cannot ſerve the Lord *without diſtraction.*

4. Diſcontent ſometimes unfits for the very uſe of reaſon; *Jonah* in a paſſion of diſcontent, ſpake no better then blaſphemy, and non-ſenſe; *I do well,* ſaith he, *to be angry to the death**. What? to be angry with God? and to die for anger? ſure he did not know well what he ſaid. When diſcontent tranſports, then like *Moſes*, we ſpeak *unadviſedly with our lips.* This humour doth even ſuſpend the very acts of reaſon. *Jona 4. 8.

5. Diſcontent doth not only diſquiet a mans ſelf, but thoſe who are neer him. This evil ſpirit troubles *Families, Pariſhes, &c.* If there be but one ſtring out of tune, it ſpoiles all the muſick. One diſcontented ſpirit makes jarrings and diſcords a-

mong others. 'Tis this ill humour that breeds quarrels and Law-ſuits. Whence is all our *Contention*, but for want of *Contentation*? From whence *come wars and fightings among you?* *Jam. 4. 1. *come they not hence even of your luſts**? in particular from this *luſt* of Diſcontent? Why did *Abſalom* raiſe a warre againſt his Father, and would have taken off not only his *Crown*, but his *Head*? was it not his diſcontent? *Abſalom* would be King. Why did *Ahab* ſtone *Naboth*? was it not diſcontent about the Vine-yard? Oh this devil of Diſcontent! Thus you have ſeen the ſinfulneſſe of it.

3. Conſider the ſimplicity of it. *The ſimplicity of it.* I may ſay as the Pſalmiſt, *Surely they are diſquieted in vaine* *: which *Pſal. 39. 6 appears thus.

2. Is it not a vain ſimple thing to be troubled at the loſſe of that which is in its own nature periſhing and changable? God hath put a viciſſitude

ſitude into the creature; all the world rings changes; and for me to meet with inconſtancy here, to loſe a friend, eſtate, to be in a conſtant fluctuation, is no more then to ſee a flower wither, or a leaf drop off in Autumne. There is an *Autumn* upon every comfort, a *fall of the leaf*; Now it is extream folly to be diſcontented at the loſſe of thoſe things which are in their own nature loſeable. What *Solomon* ſaith of *Riches*, is true of all things under the Sunne, *They take wings*. *Noahs* Dove brought an Olive-branch in its mouth; but preſently flew out of the Ark, and never returned more: Such a comfort brings to us honey in its mouth; but it hath wings; and to what purpoſe ſhould we be troubled, unleſſe we had wings to flie after and overtake it?

2. Diſcontent is an heart-breaking; *by ſorrow of the heart the ſpirit is broken* *; it takes away the * Prov. 15. 13

comfort of life. There is none of us but have many mercies if we can see them; now because we have not all we desire, therefore we will lose the comfort of that which we have already. *Jonah* having his Gourd smitten (a withering vanity,) was so discontented, that he never thought of his miraculous deliverance out of the Whales belly; he takes no comfort of his life, but wisheth that he might die. What folly is this? we must have all or none; herein we are like children, that throw away the piece which is cut them, because they may have no bigger. Discontent eates out the comfort of life. Besides, it were well if it were seriously weighed how prejudicial this is, even to our health: For discontent, as it doth discruciate the minde, so it doth pine the body; it frets as a moth, and by wasting the spirits, weakens the vitals; The plurisie of Discontent brings the body into

into a consumption; and is not this Folly?

3. Discontent does not ease us of our burden, but makes the crosse heavier. A contented spirit goes chearfully under its affliction. Discontent makes our grief as unsupportable, as it is unreasonable. If the leg be well, it can endure a fetter, and not complain; but if the leg be sore, then the fetter troubles. Discontent of minde is the *sore* that makes the Fetters of affliction more grievous. Discontent troubles us more then the trouble it selfe, it steeps the affliction in worm-wood. When Christ was upon the Crosse, the Jewes brought him *gall and vineger* to drink, that it might adde to his sorrow. Discontent brings to a man in affliction gall and vineger to drink; this is worse then the affliction it self. Is it not folly for a man to imbitter his own crosse?

4. Discontent spins out our

troubles the longer. A Christian is discontented because he is in want; and therefore he is in want, because he is discontented; he murmurs because he is afflicted; and therefore he is afflicted, because he murmurs. Discontent doth delay and adjourn our mercies. God deales herein with us as we use to do with our children: when they are quiet and cheerful, they shall have any thing; but if we see them cry and fret, then we with-hold from them: We get nothing from God by our discontent, but blows. The more the child struggles, the more it is beaten: When we struggle with God by our sinful passions, he doubles and trebles his stroaks; God will tame our curst hearts. What got *Israel* by their peevishnesse? they were within eleven days journey of *Canaan*, and now they were discontented, and began to murmur; God leads them a march of fourty yeares long in the wilder-

wilderneſſe. Is it not folly for us to adjourn our own mercies? Thus you have ſeen the evil of diſcontent. I have been long upon this Argument; but *nunquam nimis dicitur, quod nunquam ſatis dicitur.*

SECT. VIII.

The eighth Argument to Contentation.

The next Argument or Motive to Contentment is this; why is not a man content with the competency which he hath? perhaps if he had more, he would be leſſe content; covetouſneſſe is a drie drunkenneſſe. The world is ſuch, that the more we *have*, the more we *crave**; it cannot fill the heart of man. When the fire burnes, how do you quench it? not by pouring oyle on the flame, or laying on more wood, but by withdraw-

* *Creſcit amor nummi quantum ipſa pecunia creſcit.*

ing the fuel. When the appetite is enflam'd after riches, how may a man be satisfied? not by having just what he desires, but by withdrawing the *fuel*, *&c.* moderating and lessening his desires. He that is contented hath enough. A man in a fever or dropsie, thirsts; how do you satisfie him? not by giving him liquid things which will enflame his thirst the more, but by removing the cause, and so curing his distemper. The way for a man to be contented, is not by raising his estate higher, but by bringing his heart lower.

SECT. IX.

The ninth Argument to Contentation.

The next Argument to Contentment is, *The shortnesse of life.* It is but

but *a vapour*, saith *James**. ὁ βίος τρόχος*, life is a wheele ever running. The Poets painted time with wings, to shew the volubility and swiftness of it. *Iob* compares it to a *swift Post*,*(our life rides post) and to a *day*, not a *year*. It is indeed like a *day*. Infancy is as it were the *day break*, *Youth* is the Sun-rising, *full growth* is the Sun in the Meridian, *old age* is Sun-setting. *Sickness* is the *evening*, then comes the *night* of death. How quickly is this day of life spent? often times this Sun goes down at noone-day; life ends before the evening of old age comes; Nay, sometimes the Sun of life sets presently after Sun-rising. Quickly after the dawning of Infancy, the night of death approaches. Oh, how short is the life of man! The consideration of the brevity of life may work the heart to contentment. Remember thou art to be here but a day; *parum viæ, quid multúm viatici?* thou hast but

*Jam. 4 14
* Πνεῦμα κῆσαι. *Sophocles.*
* *Phocilides.*
*Job 9.25.

but a ſhort way to go, & what needs a long proviſion for a ſhort way *? if a Traveller hath but enough to bring him to his journies end, he deſires no more. We have but a day to live, & perhaps we may be in the twelfth houre of the day; why, if God give us but enough to bear our charges till night, it is ſufficient. Let us be content. If a man had the leaſe of an houſe or farme, but for two or three dayes, and he ſhould fall a building and planting, would he not be judged very indiſcreet? So when we have but a ſhort time here, and death calls us preſently off the ſtage, to thirſt immoderately after the world, and pull down our ſoules to build up an eſtate, is it not extream folly? Therefore as *Eſau* ſaid once in a *profane ſenſe* concerning his birth-right; *Lo, I am at the point to die, and what profit ſhall this birth-right do to me?* So let a Chriſtian ſay in a *Religious ſenſe*; Lo, I am even

* *Quid opus eſt ad brevem vitam longis opibus?* Hyper.

even at the point of death, my grave is going to be made, and what good will the world do me? If I have but enough till *Sun-setting*, I am content.

SECT. X.

The tenth Argument to Contentation.

The tenth Argument or Motive to Contentment is; Conſider ſeriouſly the nature of a proſperous condition. There are in a proſperous eſtate three things.

1. *Plus moleſtiæ*, more trouble. Many who have abundance of all things to enjoy, yet have not ſo much content and ſweetneſſe in their lives, as ſome that go to their hard labour. Sad, ſolicitous thoughts do often attend a proſperous condition. *Care* is the *malus genius*, or evil

1. *Plus moleſtiæ.*

vil ſpirit which haunts the rich man, and will not ſuffer him to be quiet. When his cheſt is full of gold, his heart is full of care, either how to *manage*, or how to *encreaſe*, or how to *ſecure* what he hath gotten. Ch the troubles and perplexities that do waite upon proſperity! The worlds high ſeats are very uneaſie; Sun-ſhine is pleaſant, but ſometimes it ſcorcheth with its heat; the Bee gives honey, but ſometimes it ſtings: Proſperity hath its ſweetneſſe, and alſo its ſting. *Competency with Contentment is farre more eligible.* Never did *Jacob* ſleep better then when he had the heavens for his Canopy, & an hard ſtone for his pillow. A large voluminous eſtate is but like a long trailing garment, which is more troubleſome then uſeful.

2. *Plus periculi.* 2. In a proſperous condition there is *plus periculi*, more danger, and that two wayes.

Firſt, *Ex parte ipſius*, in reſpect of

of a mans self. The rich mans *Table is oft his snare*; he is ready to ingulph himselfe too deep in these sweet waters*. In this sense it is hard to know how to *abound*. It must be a strong braine that beares heady wine; he had need have much wisdome and grace that knows how to bear an high condition; either he is ready to kill himself with care, or surfet himselfe upon luscious delights. Oh the hazard of *honour*, the damage of dignity! Pride, security, rebellion, are the three wormes that breed of plenty*. The pastures of prosperity are ranke and surfeting. How soon are we broken upon the soft pillow of ease*? Prosperity is often a *trumpet* that sounds a *retreat*, it calls men off from the pursuit of Religion. The Sun of Prosperity oft dulls, and puts out the fire of zeale. How many soules hath the *plurisie* of abundance kill'd*? They that *will be rich*, fall into

* *Magnæ fœlicitatis est à fœlicitate non vinci.* Aug de verb Dom. c. 13.

* Deut. 32. 15.

* πλείους γὰρ ἡ περίσσεια ἐκτραχηλίζει ἢ ἡ ἔνδεια. Theophilact.

* *Plurimi sunt qui*

into ſnares *. The world is bird-lime at our feet, it is full of *golden ſands*, but they are *quickſands*. Proſperity like ſmooth *Jacob*, will ſupplant and betray; a great eſtate without much vigilancy will be a thief to rob us of heaven; ſuch as are upon the pinacle of honour, are in moſt danger of falling.

paupertate poſiti non habent patientiam; & qui abundantiâ, non habent temperantiam Remigius.

* 1 Tim. 6. 10.

Sæpiùs ventis agitatur ingens
Pinus, & celſæ graviore caſu
Decidunt turres, feriúntque ſummos
Fulmina montes, &c.

Hor. *carm.* l. 2. *ode* 10.

A lower eſtate is leſſe hazardous. The little Pinnace rides ſafe by the Shore, when the gallant Ship advancing with its maſt and top-ſail, is caſt away. *Homo victus in Paradiſo, victor in ſtercore. Adam* in Paradiſe was overcome, when *Job* on the dung-hill was a conquerour. *Samſon* fell aſleep on *Delilahs* lap: Some have

have fallen ſo faſt aſleep on the lap of eaſe and plenty, that they have never awaked till they have been in hell*. The worlds *fawning* is worſe then its *frowning*; and it is more to be feared when it ſmiles, then when it thunders *. Proſperity in Scripture is compared to a candle: *Job* 29. 3. *When his candle ſhined upon my head.* How many have burnt their wings about this candle! *Segetem ubertas nimia ſternit, rami onere franguntur, ad maturitatem non pervenit nimia fœcunditas* *: The corne being over-ripe ſheds, and fruit when it mellows, begins to rot; When men do mellow with the Sun of Proſperity, commonly their ſoules begin to rot in ſin. *How hard is it for a rich man to enter into the Kingdome of Heaven* *? His golden weights keep him from aſcending up *the hill of God*, and ſhall we not be content, though we are placed in a lower Orbe? What if we are not in

* *Turpi fregerunt ſæcula luxu Divitiæ molles &c.* Juvenal 6. Satyr.

* *Periculoſior eſt mundus blandiens quàm fulminans.* Aug.

* Sen. *ad* Lucilium Ep. 80.

* Luk. 18. 24

in ſo much bravery, and gallantry as others: we are not in ſo much danger as we want the honour of the world, ſo the temptations. Oh the abundance of danger that is in abundance! We ſee by common experience, that *Lunaticks*, when the Moone is declining and in the wane, are ſober enough; but when it is in the full, they are more wilde and exorbitant: When mens eſtates are in the wane, they are more ſerious about their ſoules, more humble; but when it is the *full of the Moon*, and they have abundance, then their hearts beginne to ſwell with their eſtates, and are ſcarce themſelves. Thoſe that write concerning the ſeveral *Climates*, obſerve, that ſuch as live in the Northern parts of the world, if you bring them into the South part, they loſe their ſtomacks, and dye quickly; but thoſe that live in the more Southerne hot climates, bring them into the North

North, and their ſtomacks mend, and they are long-lived: Give me leave to apply it; bring a man from the cold ſtarving climate of poverty, into the hot Southern climate of proſperity, and he begins to loſe his appetite to good things, he growes weak, and a thouſand to one if all his Religion doth not die; but bring a Chriſtian from the South to the North, from a rich flouriſhing eſtate into a jejune low condition, let him come into a more cold and hungry aire, and then his ſtomack mends, he hath better appetite after heavenly things, he hungers more after Chriſt, he thirſts more for grace, he eats more at one meal of the bread of life then at ſix before; this man is now like to live and hold out in his Religion; be content then with a *modicum*, if you have but enough to pay for your paſſage to heaven, it ſufficeth.

2. A proſperous condition is

dangerous *ex parte vicini*, in regard of others: a great eſtate for the moſt part drawes * envy to it*, whereas *in parvis quies. David a ſhepherd* was quiet; but *David a Courtier*, was purſued by his enemies: envy cannot endure a ſuperiour; an envious man knows not how to live, but upon the ruines of his neighbour; he raiſeth himſelf higher by bringing others lower. Proſperity is an eye-ſore to many. Such ſheep as have moſt wool are ſooneſt fleec'd. The barren tree growes peaceably, no man meddles with the Aſh or Willow, but the Apple-tree and the Damaſin ſhall have many rude ſuitors. Oh then be content to carry a leſſer ſaile; he that hath leſſe *revenues*, hath leſſe *envy*; ſuch as bear the faireſt frontiſpiece, and make the greateſt ſhew in the world, are the *white* for envy and malice to ſhoot at.

* Gen. 26. 12, 13, 14.

* *Fœlicitas ſemper ſubjecta eſt invidiæ.* Laert. Diogenes *de vit. Philoſ.*

3. *Plus recenſionis.* 3. A proſperous condition hath in

in it *plus recenſionis*, a greater reckoning; every man muſt be reſponſible for his talents. Thou that haſt great poſſeſſions in the world, doſt thou trade thy eſtate for Gods glory? Art thou *rich in good works?* Art thou a κοινὸν ἀγαθὸν? Grace makes a *private perſon* a *common good*. Doſt thou diſburſs thy mony for publick uſes? it is lawful (in this ſenſe) to put out our money to uſe. Oh let us all remember an eſtate is a *depoſitum*: we are but ſtewards, and our Lord and Maſter will ere long ſay, *Give an account of your ſtewardſhip*: the greater our eſtate, the greater *our charge*; the more our renues, the more our reckonings. You that have a leſſer mill going in the world, be content; God will expect leſſe from you, where he hath ſowed more ſparingly.

SECT. XI.

The eleventh Argument to Contentation.

The eleventh Argument is the example of those who have been eminent for Contentation. *Examples* are usually more forcible then *Precepts*. *Abraham* being call'd out to hot service, and such as was against flesh and blood, was content. God bids him offer up his sonne *Isaac* *; this was a great work: *Isaac* was *filius senectutis*, the sonne of his old age; *filius dilectionis*; the sonne of his love; *filius promissi*, the sonne of the promise: Christ the Messiah was to come of his line, *in Isaac shall thy seed be blessed*; so that to offer up *Isaac* seem'd not onely to oppose *Abrahams* reason, but his *faith* too; for if *Isaac* die, the world (for ought he knew)

*Gen. 22 2

knew) must be without a Mediatour. Besides, if *Isaac* be sacrificed, was there no other hand to do it, but *Abrahams*? must the Father needs be the executioner? must he that was the instrument of giving *Isaac* his being, be the instrument of taking it away? yet *Abraham* doth not dispute or hesitate, but believes *against hope*, and is content with Gods prescription. So, when God call'd him to *leave his countrey* *, he was content. Some would have argued thus: what? leave all my friends, my native soile, my brave situation, and go turne pilgrim? *Abraham* is content: besides, *Abraham* went blindfold, *he knew not whither he went* *. God held him in suspense, he must go wander he knows not where; and when he doth come to the place God had laid out for him, he knows not what oppositions he shall meet with there; the world doth seldome cast a favourable aspect upon strangers *,

* Heb. 11. 8

* Verse 8.

* Gen. 31. 15

yet he is content, and obeys; *He so-*
*Heb.11.9 *journed in the land of promise**; behold a little his pilgrimage. First, He goes to *Charran* a City in *Mesopotamia*; when he had sojourned there a while, his father dies; then he removes to *Sichem* then to *Bethlem* in *Canaan*; *there* a famine ariseth, *then* he went down to *Egypt*, after that he returns into *Canaan*; when he came there ('tis true, he had a promise) but he found nothing to answer expectation; he had not there one foot of land, but was an exile: in this time of his sojourning he buried his wife; & as for his dwellings he had no sumptuous buildings, but led his life in poore cottages: all this was enough to have broken any mans heart. *Abraham* might think thus with himselfe, is this the land I must possesse? here is no probability of any good; *al things are against me*; wel, is he discontented? no, God saith to him, *Abraham* go, leave thy Countrey; and this word

was

was enough to lead him all the world over, he is presently upon his march; here was a man had learned to be content. But let us descend a little lower, to Heathens*. *Zeno* (of whom *Seneca* speaks) who had once been very rich, hearing of a ship-wrack, and that all his goods were drowned at Sea, Fortune, saith he (he spake in an Heathen dialect) hath dealt well with me, and would have me now to study Philosophy*; he was content to change his course of life, to leave off being Merchant, and turne Philosopher. And if an Heathen said thus, shall not a Christian much more say, when the world is drained from him, *Iubet Deus mundum derelinquere & Christum expeditiùs sequi*, God would have me leave off following the world, and study Christ more, and how to get to heaven? Do I see an Heathen contented, and a Christian disquieted*? How did Heathens vilifie those things which Christians

* Socrates *Philosophorum lucu-lentissimus, pauper semper, nudis pedibus incedens, sordido palliolo contentus, honores omniaque terrena contemnens* Plut.

* *Iubet me fortuna expeditiùs Philosophari.* Seneca.

* *Pudeat, pudeat illos nomine tenus Christianos, quibus quod ad hanc rem attinet, Ethnici rectiùs sapuerunt.* Hyperius.

magnifie? though they knew not God, or what true happineſſe meant, yet would ſpeak very ſublimely of a *Numen* or Deity, and of the life to come, as *Ariſtotle* and *Plato*; and for thoſe Elizian delights which they did but phanſie, they undervalued and contemned the things here below; it was the doctrine they taught their Scholars, and which ſome of them practiſed, that *men ſhould ſtrive to be contented with a little*; they were willing to make an exchange; to have leſſe gold, and more learning: and ſhall not we be content then to have leſſe of the world, ſo we may have more of Chriſt? May not Chriſtians bluſh to ſee Heathens content with a *viaticum*, ſo much as would recruit nature, and to ſee themſelves ſo tranſported with the love of earthly things? that if they begin a little to abate, and the *bill of proviſion* grows ſhort, they murmur, and are like *Micah*, *Have ye taken away*

my

*my gods, and doe you aske me what I aile** ? Have Heathens gone so faire in contentation? and is it not sad for us to come short of them that came short of heaven? These *Heroes* of their time, how did they embrace death it self? *Socrates* died in prison, *Hercules* was burnt alive, *Cato* (whom *Seneca* calls, * the lively image and portraiture of vertue) thrust through with a sword, but how bravely, and with what contentment of spirit did they die? Shall I, saith *Seneca*, weep for *Cato*, or *Regulus*, or the rest of those Worthies that died with so much valour and patience? Did not crosse providences make them to alter their countenance? and do I see a Christian appalled and amaz'd? Did not death affright them? and doth it distract us? did the spring-head of Nature rise so high? and shall not Grace, like the *waters of the Sanctuary* rise higher? We that pretend to live by faith may

* Judg. 18. 24.

* *virtutum viva imago.* Sen.

may we not go to Schoole to them who had no other Pilot but reaſon to guide them? Nay, let me come a ſtep lower, to creatures void of reaſon; we ſee every creature is contented with its allowance; the beaſts with their provender, the birds with their neſts, they live onely upon providence; and ſhall we make our ſelves below them? let a Chriſtian go to School to the Oxe and the Aſſe, to learne contentedneſſe; we think we never have enough, and are ſtill laying up; the fowles of the aire do not lay up. *they reap not; nor gather into barnes**; it is an argument which Chriſt brings to make Chriſtians contented with their condition. The birds do not lay up, yet they are provided for, and are contented, *Are ye not* (ſaith Chriſt) *much better then they?* but if you are diſcontented, are ye not much worſe then they? let theſe examples quicken us.

* Mat. 6. 26.

SECT.

SECT. XII.

The twelfth Argument to Contentation.

The twelfth Argument to Contentment is, whatever change or trouble a childe of God meets with, it is all the hell he ſhall have. Whatever eclipſe may be upon his name, or eſtate; I may ſay of it as *Athanaſius* of his baniſhment, it is *nubecula citò tranſitura*, a little cloud which will ſoon be blown over; and then his gulf is ſhot, his hell is paſt;

Albus ut obſcuro detergit unbila cælo
Sæpe Notus, neque parturit imbres
Perpetuos ſic tu Sapiens finire memento
Triſtitiam. Hor. *Ode* 7. l. 1.

Death begins a wicked mans hel, but it puts an end to a godly mans hell.

Think

Think with thy ſelf, what if I endure this? it is but a *temporary hell*; indeed if all our hell be here, it is but an eaſie hell. What is the cup of affliction to the cup of Damnation? *Lazarus* could not get a crumbe; he was ſo diſeaſed, that the dogs took pity on him, and (as if they had been his phyſicians) *licked his ſores*; but this was an eaſie hell, the *Angels* quickly fetch'd him out of it. If all our hell be in this life, in the midſt of this hell we may have the love of God, and then it is no more *Hell*, but *Paradiſe*. If our hell be here, we may ſee to the *bottome* of it, it is but skin-deep, it cannot touch the ſoul, and we may ſee to the *end* of it: 'tis an hell that is ſhort-liv'd*: After a wet night of affliction comes a bright morning of the Reſurrection; if our lives are ſhort, our trials cannot be long. As our *riches* take *wings* and flie, ſo do our *ſufferings*; then let us be contented.

* *Nocte pluit tota, redeunt ſpectacula manè.*

SECT.

SECT. XIII.

The thirteenth Argument to Contentation.

The laſt Argument to contentment is this, To have a *competency*, and to want *Contentment*, is a great judgement. For a man to have an huge ſtomack *, that whatever meat you give him, he is ſtill craving, and never ſatisfied; you uſe to ſay, this is a great judgement upon the man: Thou who art *heluo pecuniæ*, a devourer of money, and yet never haſt enough, but ſtill crieſt *Give, give*; this is a ſad judgement; *They ſhall eat and not have enough* *. The *throat* of a malicious man is an open *Sepulchre* *, ſo is the heart of a covetous man. Covetouſneſſe is not onely *malum culpæ*, but *malum pœnæ*; it is not onely a *ſinne*, but the

* *Caninum appetitum.*

* Hoſ. 4. 10

* Rom. 3. 13

the *punishment* of a sin. 'Tis a secret curse upon a covetous person, he shall thirst, and thirst, and never be satisfied; *He that loveth silver, shall not be* *Eccl. 5. 10 *satisfied with silver**, and is not this a curse? What was it but a severe judgment upon the people of *Judah? Ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink**. Oh let * Hag. 1. 6. us take heed of this *plague*. Did *Esau* *Gen. 33. 9 say to his brother, I have *abundance**, my brother, *or as we translate it, * אחי רב־לי. *have enough*: and shall not a Christian say so much more? 'Tis sad that our hearts should be so dead to heavenly things, and as a spunge to suck in earthly. Let all that hath been said, work our mindes to holy Contentation.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

Three things inſerted by way of Caution.

IN the next place I come to lay down ſome neceſſary Cautions: though (I ſay) a man ſhould be contented in every eſtate; yet there are three eſtates in which he muſt not be contented. *Caution 1.*

1. He muſt not be contented in a *natural eſtate*; here he muſt learn not to be content. A ſinner in his pure naturals is under *the wrath of God* *, and ſhall he be content, when that dreadful Vial is going to be poured out? is it nothing to be under the ſcorchings of divine fury? *Who can dwell with everlaſting burnings?* A ſinner, as a ſinner, is *under the power of Satan* *, and ſhall he in *this eſtate* be contented? who would be contented

* Joh. 3. 16.

* Acts 26. 18

to

to ſtay in the enemies quarters? while we ſleep in the lap of ſinne, the Devil doth to us as the *Philiſtines* did to *Sampſon*, cut the lock of our ſtrength, and put out our eyes *; be not content, O ſinner in this eſtate. For a man to be in debt body and ſoul, in fear every hour to be arreſted and carried priſoner to hell, ſhall he now be content? here I preach againſt contentation. Oh get out of this condition, I would haſten you out of it, as the Angel haſtened *Lot* out of *Sodom* *; there is the ſmell of the fire and brimſtone upon you. The longer a man ſtayes in his ſinne, the more ſinne doth ſtrengthen *; 'tis hard to get out of ſin when the heart as a garriſon is victualled and fortified. A young plant is eaſily removed; but when the tree is once rooted, there is no ſtirring of it: thou who

* 2 Cor. 4 4

* Gen. 19. 15.

* Heb. 3. 13.

Vincere conſuetudinem eſt dura pugna Aug.

* Τὸ μὴ καθαρὸν τῷ σώματι ὁ χρόνιν ἀνθρώπης μᾶλλον βλάπτει. Hippocr. l. 2. Aphor. 9

who are rooted in thy pride, unbelief, impenitency, it will coſt thee many a ſad pull ere thou art plucked out of thy *natural eſtate* *. 'Tis an hard thing to have a brazen face & a broken heart, *He travelleth with iniquity* *, *Pſal.* 7. 14. Be aſſured the longer you travel with your ſinnes, the more and the ſharper pangs muſt you expect in the *new-birth*. Oh be not contented with your natural eſtate. *David* ſaith, *Why art thou diſquieted, O my ſoul* *? but a ſinner ſhould ſay to himſelf, Why art thou not diſquieted, O my ſoul; why is it that thou layeſt afflictions ſo to heart, and canſt not lay ſin to heart? 'Tis a mercy when we are diſquieted about ſinne; a man had better be at the trouble of ſetting a bone, then to be lame, and in paine all his life; bleſſed is that trouble that brings the ſoul to Chriſt. 'Tis one of the worſt ſights to ſee a bad conſcience quiet; of the two, better is a fever, then a

* Jer. 6. 16

* Pſa. 7. 14.

* Pſ. 4. 53.

lethargy. I wonder to see a man in his natural estate content; what? content to go to hell?

Caution. 2. 2. Though in regard of externals a man should be in every state content, yet he must not be content in such a condition wherein God is apparently dishonoured. If a mans trade be such that he can hardly use it, but he must trespasse upon a Command (and so *make a trade of sinne*) he must not content himself in such a condition; God never called any man to such a calling as is sinful; a man in this case had better knock off, and divert; better lose some of his gaine, so he may lessen some of his guilt. So for servants that live in a *profane family* (the suburbs of hell) where the Name of God is not called upon, unless when it is taken in vain; they are not to content themselves in such a place, they are to come *out of the Tents of these sinners*; there is a double danger in living among the prophane. 1. Lest

1. Leſt we come to be infected with the poiſon of their ill example. *Joſeph* living in *Pharaohs* Court, had learned to *ſwear by the life of Pharaoh* *. We are prone to ſuck in example *, men take in deeper impreſſions by the *eye*, then by the *ear*. *Dives* was a bad patterne, and he had many brethren that ſeeing him ſinne, trode juſt in his ſteps; therefore ſaith he, I pray thee ſend him *to my Fathers houſe, for I have five brethren: that he may teſtifie to them, that they come not into this place of torment* *. *Dives* knew which way they went; it is eaſie to catch a diſeaſe from another, but not to catch health. The bad will ſooner *corrupt* the good, then the good will *convert* the bad; take an equal quantity and proportion, ſo much ſweet wine with ſo much ſower vineger; the vineger will ſooner ſower the wine, then the wine will ſweeten the vineger. Sinne is compared to the

* Gen. 42. 15

* *Vivitur exemplis magis quàm legibus.*

* Luk. 16. 27, 28.

*plague**, and to *leaven**, to ſhew of what a ſpreading nature it is. A bad maſter makes a bad ſervant, *Jacobs* cattel by looking on the rods which were ſpeckled and ring-ſtrak'd conceived like the rods. We do as we ſee others *before* us, eſpecially *above* us. If the head be ſick, the other parts of the body are diſtempered. If the Sunne ſhine not upon the mountaines, it muſt needs ſet in the valleys. We pray, *Lead us not into temptation*; and do we lead our ſelves into temptation? *Lot* was the worlds miracle, who kept himſelf freſh in *Sodoms* ſalt water.

* 1 Kings 8 38.
* 1 Cor. 5. 7

2. By living in an evil family we are liable to incurre their puniſhment; *Pour out thy wrath upon the families that call not upon thy Name**. For want of pouring out Prayer, the wrath of God was ready to be pour-ed out. 'Tis dangerous living in the *Tents of Kedar*. When God ſends his *flying roll*, written within and

* Jer. 13. 25

and without with curſes, it enters *into the houſe of the thief and perjurer, and it conſumes the timber and the ſtones thereof**. Is it not of ſad con- *Zach. 5.4
ſequence to live in a prophane perjur'd family; when the ſin of the Governour pulls his houſe about his eares? if the ſtone and timber be deſtroyed, how ſhall the ſervant eſcape? And ſuppoſe God ſend not a *temporal roll* of curſes in the family, there is a *ſpiritual roll*, and that is worſe*. Be not content to live *Pro 3.33.
where Religion dies, *Salute the brethren, and* Nymphas, *and the Church which is in his houſe**; the houſe of *Col.4 15
the godly is a *little Church*, the houſe of the wicked a *little hell**. Oh incor- *Pro.7.27
porate your ſelves into a religious family, the houſe of a good man is perfum'd with a bleſſing*. When *Pro 3.33
the holy oyle of grace is poured on the head, the *ſavour* of this ointment ſweetly diffuſeth it ſelf, and the *vertue* of it runs down upon the skirts

of the family. Pious examples are very magnetical and forcible. *Seneca* said to his sister, Though I leave you not wealth, yet I will leave you a good example. Let us ingraffe our selves among the Saints; by being often among the spices, we come to smell of them.

Caution 3. 3. The third Caution is, though in every condition we must be content, yet we are not to content our selves with a *little grace*. Grace is the *best blessing*. Though we should be contented with a competency of estate, yet not with a competency of grace. It was the end of Christs Ascension to heaven, *to give gifts*; and the end of those gifts, *that we may grow up into him who is the head,* *Eph.4.15 *Christ* *. Where the Apostle distinguisheth between our *being* in Christ, and our *growing* in him; our ingraffing, and our flourishing: be not content with a *modicum* in Religion. 'Tis not enough that there be *life*, but

but there must be *fruit*. Barrenneſſe in the Law was accounted a curſe. The farther we are from fruit, the nearer we are to curſing*. 'Tis a ſad thing when men are fruitful onely *in the unfruitful works of darkneſſe*. Be not content with a dram or two of grace; next to a *ſtill-borne*, a *ſtarveling* in Chriſt is worſt. Oh covet more grace, never think thou haſt enough; it is *bona & honeſta avaritia*; we are bid to *covet the beſt things**: it is an heavenly ambition, when we deſire to be high in Gods favour; a bleſſed contention, when all the ſtrife is, who ſhall be moſt holy. Saint *Paul*, though he was content with a little of the world, yet not with a little grace; he *reached forward* and *preſſed towards the mark of the high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus**. A true Chriſtian is a *wonder*, he is the moſt contented, and yet the leaſt ſatisfied: he is contented with a morſel of

* Heb. 6. 8

* 1 Cor. 12

* Phil. 3. 13, 14.

bread, and a little water in the Cruſe, yet never ſatisfied with grace; he doth *anhelare*, pant and breath after more; this is his prayer, Lord, more conformity *to* Chriſt, more communion *with* Chriſt; he would faine have Chriſts image more lively pictured upon his ſoul. True grace is alwayes progreſſive: as the Saints are called *Lampes* and *Starres* in regard of their *light*; ſo *trees of righteouſneſſe* * for their growth; they are indeed like the tree of life, bringing forth ſeveral ſorts of fruit.

*Iſa.61.3

A true Chriſtian grows, 1. *Formâ, in beauty.* Grace is the beſt complexion of the ſoul; it is at the firſt plantation like *Rachel*, faire to look upon; but ſtill the more it lives, the more it ſends forth its rayes of beauty. *Abrahams* faith was at firſt beautiful, but at laſt it did ſhine in its orient colours, and grew ſo illuſtrious, that God himſelf was in love with

with it, and makes his faith a paterne to all Beleevers.

2. A true Christian growes *Suavitate*, in sweetnesse. A poisonful weed may grow as much as the Hyssop, or Rose mary; the Poppy in the field, as the Corne, the Crab, as the Pearmaine; but the one hath a harsh, sowre taste, the other mellows as it growes; An hypocrite may grow in outward demensions, as much as a childe of God; he may pray as much, professe as much; but he growes onely in magnitude, he brings forth sowre grapes, his duties are leavened with pride; the other ripens as he growes, he growes in love, humility, faith, which do mellow and sweeten his duties, and make them come off with a better relish. The beleever grows as the flower, he casts a fragrancy and perfume.

3. A true Christian growes *Robore*, in *strength*; he growes still more *rooted*, and *setled*. The more the tree growes

growes, the more it ſpreads its root in the earth *: A Chriſtian who is a Plant of the heavenly *Jeruſalem*, the longer he grows, the more he incorporates into Chriſt, and ſucks ſpiritual juice and ſap from him; he is a dwarfe in regard of humility, but a gyant in regard of ſtrength. He is ſtrong to do duties, to bear burdens, to reſiſt tentations.

* ἐρριζωμένοι. Col. 2. 7.

4. He grows *Vigore*, in the *exerciſe of his grace*; He hath not only oile in his lamps, but his lamps are burning and ſhining. Grace is agil and dexterous. Chriſts vines do flouriſh *, hence we read of a *lively hope* *, and a *fervent love* *; here is the activity of grace. Indeed ſometimes grace is as a ſleepy habit in the ſoul, like ſap in the vine, not exerting its vigour, which may be occaſion'd through ſpiritual ſloth, or by reaſon of falling into ſome ſin; but this is only *pro tempore*, for a while; *the ſpring* of grace will come, the *flowers will appear*,

* Cant. 6 11.
* 1 Pet. 1. 3.
* 1 Pet. 1. 22.

pear, and *the fig-tree putforth her green figs*. The freſh gales of the Spirit do ſweetly revive and refocillate grace. The Church of Chriſt, whoſe heart was a *garden*, and her graces as precious *ſpices*, prayes for the heavenly breathings of the Spirit, that her ſacred ſpices might flow out*. * Cant. 4. 16.

1. A true Chriſtian grows *Incremento*, both in the kind and in the degree of grace. To his ſpiritual *living* he gets an augmentation: he addes to *faith*, *vertue*; to *vertue*, *knowledge*, to *knowledge*, *temperance &c.* * here is grace growing in the *kind*; and he goes on *from faith to faith**; there is grace growing in the *degree*. *We are bound to give thanks to God for you brethren, becauſe your faith groweth exceedingly* *, ὑπεραυξάνει, it encreaſeth over and above. And the Apoſtle ſpeaks of thoſe ſpiritual plants which were laden with Goſpel fruit*, *Phil.* 1. 11. A Chriſtian is com- * 2 Pet. 1, 5, 6. * Rom. 1. 17. * 2 Theſ. 1. 3. * Phil. 1. 11.

compar'd to the *Vine*, (an embleme of fruitfulneſſe,) he muſt bear full cluſters; We are bid to *perfect* that 1 Theſ. 3 which is *lacking in our faith* *. A 10. Chriſtian muſt never be ſo old as to ſ. 92.14 be paſt bearing; he brings forth fruit in *his old age* *. An heaven-born plant is ever growing; he never thinks he growes enough; he is not content unleſſe he adde every day one cubit to his ſpiritual ſtature. We muſt not be content juſt with ſo much grace as will keep life and ſoul together; a dram or two muſt not ſuffice, but we muſt be ſtil encreaſing *Col. 2. 9. *with the encreaſe of God* *: We had *Iſa 40. 31. need *renew* our ſtrength as the *Eagle* *; our ſinnes are renewed, our wants are renewed, our tentations are renewed, and ſhal not our *ſtrength* be renewed? Oh be not content with the firſt *embryo* of grace, grace in its infancy and minority. You look for degrees of glory; be you Chriſtians of degrees. Though

Though a Beleever ſhould be contented with a *modicum* in his eſtate, yet not with a *modicum* in Religion. A Chriſtian of the right breed labours ſtill to excel himſelfe, and come nearer unto that holineſſe in God, who is the original, the paterne and prototype of all holineſſe.

CHAP. XIII.

USE 4.

Shewing how a Chriſtian may know whether he hath learned this divine Art.

Uſe. IV. THus having laid down theſe three Cautions, I proceed in the next place to an uſe of Trial. 4. How may a Chriſtian know that he hath learned this leſſon of Contentment? I ſhall lay down ſome *κριτηρια*, or characters by which you ſhall know it. *Uſe.* IV. *Triall,*

1. A

1. *Charact.* 1. A contented spirit is a *silent spirit.* He hath not one word to say against God; I was *dumb* or *silent*, *Psal. 39. because *thou, Lord, didst it**, Ps. 39. Contentment silenceth all dispute; *Lam. 3. 28 *He sitteth alone and keepeth silence**. There is a *sinful* silence, when God is dishonoured, his truth wounded, and men hold their peace; this silence is a loud sinne: and there is an *holy* silence, when the soul sits down quiet and content with its condition; When *Samuel* tells *Eli* that heavy message from God, that he would *judge his house, and that the iniquity of his family should not be purged away with sacrifice for ever**; doth *Eli* *1 Sam. 3. 13 murmur, or dispute? No, he hath not one word to say against God; *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good** A discontented spirit saith, *Ver. 18. as *Pharaoh, Who is the Lord?* why should I suffer all this? why should I be brought into this low condition? *Who is the Lord?* But a gracious heart

saith as *Eli*, *It is the Lord*, let him do what he will with me. When *Nadab* and *Abihu*, the sons of *Aaron*, had offered up *strange fire*, and *fire went from the Lord, and devoured them**, is *Aaron* now in a passion of discontent? No, *Aaron held his peace**. A contented spirit is never angry, unless with himself for having hard thoughts of God. When *Jonah* said, *I do well to be angry*; this was not a contented spirit, it did not become a Prophet.

* Levit. 10. 1.

* Vers. 3

2. A contented spirit, *is a chearful spirit*; the Greeks call it εὐθυμία. Contentment is something more then *Patience*; for Patience denotes onely submission*, Contentment denotes *chearfulnesse*. A contented Christian is more then passive; he doth not only *bear the Crosse*, but *take up the Crosse**. He looks upon God as a wise God; and whatever he doth, though it be not *ad voluntatem*, yet *ad sanitatem**; it is in order to a cure: Hence the contented

2. *Charact*

* ὑπομένειν *Significat, ad vrsitates sustinere*, Cyprian *item, perseverare* Casaubon.

* Matth. 6. 24

* *Aug.*

tented Christian is chearful, and with the Apostle, *takes pleasure in infirmities, distresses, &c.* * He doth not only submit to Gods dealings, but rejoyce in them; he doth not onely say, *Just is the Lord* in all that is befallen me; but *Good is the Lord.* This is to be contented. A sullen Melancholly is hateful, it is said, God loves a *chearful giver* *; and God loves a *chearful liver.* We are bid in Scripture not to be *careful*, but we are no where bid not to be *chearful.* He that is contented with his condition, doth not abate of his spiritual joy, and indeed he hath that within him which is the ground of chearfulnesse; he carries a pardon sealed in his heart *.

* 2 Cor. 12. 10.

* 2 Cor. 9. 7

* Mat. 9. 2.

3. *Charact.* 3. A contented spirit, is a *thankful spirit* *. This is a degree above the other; *In every thing giving thanks* *. A gracious heart spies mercie in every condition, therefore hath

* Job 1. 21

ἐν παντὶ εὐχαριστεῖτε.

* 1 Thes. 5.

hath his heart ſcrued up to thankfulneſs; others will bleſs God for proſperity, he bleſſeth him for affliction. Thus he reaſons with himſelf, Am I in want? God ſees it better for me to want then to abound; God is now dieting of me, he ſees it better for my ſpiritual health, ſometimes to be kept faſting; therefore he doth not onely ſubmit, but is thankful. The malecontent is ever complaining of his condition; the contented ſpirit is ever giving thanks. Oh what height of grace is this! A contented heart is a *Temple* where the praiſes of God are ſung forth, not a *Sepulchre* wherein they are buried. A contented Chriſtian in the greateſt ſtraits hath his heart enlarged, and dilated in thankfulneſſe. He oft contemplates Gods love in election, he ſees that he is a *moniment* of mercy, therefore deſires to be a *pattern* of praiſe. There is always gratulatory muſick in a contented ſoul; the Spirit of grace works in the

heart like new wine, which under the heavieſt preſſures of ſorrow, will have a vent open for thankfulneſſe; this is to be content.

4. He that is content, no condition comes amiſs to him; ſo it is in the Text, *in quocunque ſtatu, in whatever ſtate I am**. A contented Chriſtian can, *prout res exigit*, turne himſelfe to any thing; either want, or abound. The people of *Iſrael* knew neither how to abound, nor yet how to want*; when they were in want, they murmured; *Can God prepare a Table in the wilderneſs?* and when they ate and were filled, then they lifted up the heele. *Paul* knew how to manage every eſtate; he could be either a note higher, or lower; he was (in this ſenſe) an *Univerſaliſt*, he could

* Καὶ ὀλίγοις κεχρῆσθαι οἶδα, καὶ λίμου φέρειν, καὶ ἔνδειαν, καὶ πολιτεύειν. Chryſoſt.

* Οἱ Ἰσραηλῖται ὅτε πεινᾶν ἤρξαντο, κατελάλησαν γὰρ τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ ἔιπον, Μὴ δυνήσεται ὁ Θεὸς ἑτοιμάσαι τράπεζαν, ἀλλ' ὅδε χορτάζεσθαι· ἔφαγον γὰρ καὶ ἀνεπλήσθησαν, καὶ ἀπελάκτισαν. Theophylact.

could do any thing that God would have him*: If he were in proſperity, he knew how to be thankful; if in adverſity, he knew how to be patient; he was neither lift up with the one, nor caſt down with the other. He could carry a greater ſaile, or leſſer*; Thus a contented Chriſtian knowes how to turne himſelfe to any condition. *Sicut bonus eſt dux & peritus, qui in quolibet exercitu operatur ſecundùm exigentiam ejus; & coriarius, qui ex quolibet corio facit optimos ſotulares; ità Chriſtianus ſapiens, qui ſcit quolibet ſtatu bene ſe gerere.* We have thoſe who can be contented *in ſome eſtate*, but not in every eſtate. They can be content in a wealthy eſtate, when

* *Similis eſt vita rotæ, in cujus modò infimâ, modò ſupremâ parte verſamur.* Aquinas.

* *Magna & rara virtus eſt inter epulas eſurire; inter veſtes algere, inter honores humiliari. Scivit* Hannibal *penuriam pati, neſcivit abundare, nam delitiæ Capuanæ* Hannibalem *invictum enervârunt, & Romanis jam imbellem vincendum objecerunt.* Bern.

Aquinas.

they have the ſtreames of milk and honey; while Gods candle ſhines upon their head, now they are content; but if the winde turne and be againſt them, now they are diſcontented. While they have a ſilver crutch to lean upon, they are contented; but if God breaks this crutch, now they are diſcontented; but *Paul* had learned in every eſtate to carry himſelf with equanimity of minde *; others could be content with their affliction, ſo God would give them leave to pick and chooſe. They could be contend to bear *ſuch* a croſs; they could better endure ſickneſſe then poverty, or bear loſſe of eſtate, then loſſe of children; if they might have ſuch a mans croſſe, they could be content; any condition, but the preſent: this is not to be content. A contented Chriſtian doth not go to chooſe his croſſe, but leaves

* Ἴσος ἦν ἐν τῇ ἐνδείᾳ, ἐν τῇ πλησμονῇ οὔτε ἐκεῖθεν πιεζόμενος, οὔτε ἐντεῦθεν χαυνούμενος. Chryſoſt.

leaves God to chooſe for him; he is content both for the *kinde*, and for the *duration*. A contented ſpirit ſaith; Let God apply what medicine he pleaſeth, and let it lie on as long as it will; I know when it hath done its cure, and eaten the venome of ſin out of my heart, God will take it off again. In a word, a contented Chriſtian, being ſweetly captivated under the authority of the Word, deſires to be wholly at Gods diſpoſe, and is willing to live in that ſphere and climate where God has ſet him; and if at any time he hath been an inſtrument of doing noble and brave ſervice in the publick, he knowes he is but a *rational toole*, a ſervant to authority, and is content to return to his former private condition of life. *Cincinnatus*, after he had done worthily, and purchaſed to himſelf great fame in his Dictatorſhip, did notwithſtanding afterwards voluntarily returne to till and manure

Pet. Martyr his foure acres of ground. Thus ſhould it be with Chriſtians, profeſſing *Godlineſſe with Contentment*, having ſerved *Mars*, not daring to offend *Jupiter*; leſt otherwiſe they diſcover onely to the world a *brutiſh valour*, being ſo untam'd and headſtrong, that when they have conquered others yet they are not able to rule their own ſpirits.

5. *Charact.* 5. He that is contented with his condition to rid himſelfe out of trouble will not run himſelfe into ſin. I deny not but a Chriſtian may lawfully ſeek to change his condition; ſo farre as Gods providence doth go before, he may follow; but when men will not follow providence, but run before it, as he ſaid, *This evil is of the Lord, why ſhould I wait any longer**? if God doth not open the doore by his providence, they will break it open, and winde themſelves out of affliction by ſin; bringing their ſoules into trouble by bring-

* 2 King. 6.

bringing their eſtates out of trouble. This is far from holy Contentation, this is unbelief broken out into rebellion. A contented Chriſtian is willing to wait Gods leaſure, and will not ſtir till God open a door. As *Paul* ſaid in another caſe, *They have beaten us openly, uncondemned, being* Romans, *and have caſt us into priſon, and now do they thruſt us out privily? nay verily, but let them come themſelves and fetch us out* *: So with reverence ſaith the contented Chriſtian, God hath caſt me into this condition; and though it be ſad and troubleſome, yet I will not ſtir, till God by a clear providence fetch me out. Thus thoſe brave ſpirited Chriſtians, *Heb.* 11.35. *They accepted not deliverance* *, that is, upon baſe diſhonourable termes. They would rather ſtay in priſon, then purchaſe their liberty by carnal complyance. *Eſtius* obſerves on the place, they might not onely have

* Acts 16. 37

* Heb. 11.

had their enlargement, but been rais'd to honour, and put into offices of truſt; yet the honour of Religion was dearer to them, then either liberty or honour. A contented Chriſtian will not remove, till as the *Iſraelites*, he ſee a *pillar of cloud and fire* going before him: *It is good that a man ſhould both hope and quietly wait for the ſalvation of the Lord**. 'Tis good to ſtay Gods leaſure, and not to extricate our ſelves out of trouble, till we ſee the ſtar of Gods providence pointing out a way to us.

* Lam. 3. 26

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

USE 5.

Containing a Christian Directory, or Rules about Contentment.

Use V. I Proceed now to an use of direction, to shew Christians how they may attaine to this *Divine Art* of Contentation. Certainly it is feasible, others of Gods Saints have reached to it. St. *Paul* here had it; and what do we think of those we read of in that little book of Martyrs, *Heb.* 11. who had trials of *cruel mockings and scourgings*, who wandred about in *Deserts* and *Caves*

Use 5. *Direction.*

Caves, yet were contented; ſo that it is poſſible to be had. And here I ſhall lay down ſome Rules for holy Contentment.

SECT. I.

1. Rule. *Advance Faith.*

All our diſquiets do iſſue immediately from unbelief. 'Tis this that raiſeth the ſtorme of diſcontent in the heart. Oh ſet faith a work; 'tis the property of faith to ſilence our doubtings, to ſcatter our fears, to ſtill the heart when the paſſions are up. Faith works the heart to a ſweet, ſerene compoſure; 'tis not having *food* and *raiment*, but having *Faith* which will make us content. Faith chides down paſſion; When Reaſon begins to ſink, let Faith ſwim.

Queſt. *Queſt.* How doth faith work Contentment. *Anſw.*

Answ. 1. Faith shews the soule, that whatever its trials are, yet it is from the hand of a Father; 'tis indeed a bitter cup, but, *Shall I not drink the cup which my Father hath given me to drink?* 'tis in love to my soul; God *corrects* with the same love he *crownes* me; God is now training me up for heaven, he carves me, to make me a *polished shaft*. These sufferings bring forth patience, humility, even *the peaceable fruits of righteousnesse* *. And if God can bring such sweet fruit out of a sower stock, let him graft me where he please. Thus faith brings the heart to holy contentment. *Answ.* 1. * Heb. 12. 11

2. Faith sucks the honey of Contentment out of the hive of the Promise. Christ is the *Vine*, the Promises are the clusters of Grapes that grow upon this Vine; and Faith presseth the sweet wine of Contentment out of these spiritual clusters of the Promises. I will shew you but

but one cluſter; *The Lord will give grace and glory**: here is enough for faith to live upon. The Promiſe is the flower out of which Faith diſtils the ſpirits, and quinteſſence of divine Contentment. In a word, Faith carries up the ſoul, and makes it aſpire after more noble and generous delights then earth affords, and to live *in* the world *above* the world*. Would you lead contented lives? live up to the height of your Faith.

*Pſ. 84. 11

* *Diſcite in hoc mundo ſupra mundum eſſe.* Ambroſe.

SECT. II.

2. Rule. *Labour for Aſſurance.*

Oh let us get the intereſt cleard between God and our own ſouls. *Intereſt* is a word much in uſe, a pleaſing word, Intereſt in great friends, intereſt-money; Oh if there be an *intereſt* worth looking after, 'tis an intereſt

tereſt between God and the ſoule; Labour to ſay, *My God.* To be without money, and without friends, and without God too*, is ſad; but he whoſe faith doth flouriſh into aſſurance, that can ſay, *I know in whom I have believed**, (as Saint *Paul*,) that man hath enough to give his heart contentment. When a mans debts are paid, and he can go abroad without fear of arreſting, what contentment is this! Oh, let your title be cleared; if God be ours, whatever we want in the creature, is infinitely made up in him. Do I want bread? I have Chriſt the bread of life. Am I under defilement? his blood is like the trees of the Sanctuary; not only for meat, but medicine*. If any thing in the world be worth labouring for, it is to get ſound evidences that God is ours. If this be once clear'd, what can come amiſſe? No matter what ſtormes I meet with, ſo that I know where to

* Eph. 2. 12

* 2 Tim. 1. 12.

* Ezek. 47. 12.

to put in for harbour. He that hath God to be his God is ſo well contented with his condition, that he doth not much care whether he hath any thing elſe. To reſt in a condition where a Chriſtian cannot ſay God is his God, is matter of *feare*; and if he can ſay ſo truly, and yet is not contented, is matter of *ſhame*. David *encouraged himſelfe in the* *1 Sam. 30 *Lord his God**; it was ſad with him, *Ziklag* burnt, his wives taken captive, he loſt all, and like to have loſt his Souldiers hearts too, (for they *ſpake of ſtoning him*;) yet he had the ground of Contentment within him, *viz.* *an intereſt in God*, and this was a pillar of ſupportment to his ſpirit. He that knows *God is his*, and all that is in God is *for his good*; if this doth not ſatisfie, I know nothing will.

SECT.

SECT. III.

3. Rule. *Get an humble ſpirit.*

The humble man is the contented man; if his *eſtate* be low, his heart is lower then his eſtate; therefore be content. If his *eſteem* in the world be low, he that is little in his own eyes, will not be much troubled to be little in the eyes of others. He hath a meaner opinion of himſelf then others can have of him. The humble man ſtudies his own unworthineſſe; he looks upon himſelf as *leſs then the leaſt* of Gods mercies*, and then a *little* will content him: He cries out with *Paul*, that he is *the chief of ſinners**; therefore doth not murmur, but admire: He doth not ſay his comforts are ſmall, but his ſins are great. He thinks it a mercy he is out of hell, therefore is contented.

* Gen. 32. 10

* 1 Tim. 1. 15

tented. He doth not go to carve out a more happy condition to himself; he knows the worſt piece God cuts him, is better then he deſerves. A proud man is never contented, he is one that hath an high opinion of himſelf; therefore under ſmall bleſſings is diſdainful, under ſmall croſſes impatient. The humble ſpirit is the contented ſpirit; if his croſs be light, he reckons it in the inventory of his mercies; if it be heavy, yet takes it upon his knees, knowing that when his eſtate is worſer, it is to make him better. Where you lay humility for the foundation, Contentment will be the ſuperſtructure.

SECT.

SECT. IV.

4. Rule. *Keep a clear conſcience.* 1 Tim. 3. 9

Contentment is the *Manna* that is laid up in the *Ark* of a good conſcience; Oh take heed of indulging any ſin. 'Tis as natural for guilt to breed diſquiet, as for putrid matter to breed vermine. Sin lies as *Jonah* in the ſhip, it raiſeth a tempeſt. If duſt or motes be gotten into the eye, they make the eye water, and cauſe a ſoreneſſe in it; if the eye be cleare, then it is free from that ſoreneſſe: If ſin be gotten into the conſcience, which is as the eye of the ſoul, then griefe and diſquiet breeds there; but keep the eye of conſcience clear, and all is well. What *Solomon* ſaith of a good ſtomack, I may ſay of *a good conſcience: To the hungry ſoul every bitter thing is ſweet*; ſo to a * Pro. 27. 7

good conſcience every bitter thing is ſweet; it can pick contentment out of the *Craſſe*. Good conſcience turnes the waters of *Marah* into wine. Would you have a quiet heart? get a ſmiling conſcience. I wonder not to hear *Paul* ſay, he was in every ſtate content; When he could make that triumph, *I have lived in all good conſcience to this day**. When once a mans reckonings are clear; it muſt needs let in abundance of contentment into the heart. Good conſcience can ſuck contentment out of the bittereſt drugge; under ſlanders, *This is our rejoycing, the Teſtimony of our conſcience**: in caſe of impriſonment, *Paul* had his priſon-ſongs, and could play the ſweet leſſon of contentment when his feet were in the ſtocks *; one calls it *bona conſcientiæ Paradiſus*, the Paradiſe of a good conſcience; and if it be ſo, then in priſon we may be in Paradiſe. When the times are troubleſome, good

* Act. 13. 1

* 2 Cor. 1. 12.

* Acts 16. 25

Auguſtine

good conſcience makes a calme; If conſcience be clear, what though the dayes be cloudy? Is it not a contentment to have a friend alwayes by, to ſpeak a good word for us? ſuch a friend is conſcience. Good conſcience as *Davids Harp*, drives away the evil ſpirit of diſcontent. When thoughts begin to ariſe, and the heart is diſquieted; Conſcience ſaith to a man as the *King* did to *Nehemiah*, *Why is thy countenance ſad**? So ſaith conſcience, haſt not thou the *ſeed of God* in thee? art not thou an *heir of the* Promiſe? Haſt not thou a treaſure that thou canſt never be plundered of? Why is thy countenance ſad? Oh keep conſcience clear, and you ſhall never want contentment. For a man to keep the *pipes* of his body, the veins and arteries free from colds and obſtructions, is the beſt way to maintaine health: So, to keep conſcience clear, and to preſerve it from the obſtructions

* Neh 2 2

obstructions of guilt, is the best way to maintaine contentment. First, conscience is pure and then peaceable.

SECT. V.

5. Rule. *Learn to deny your selves.*

Look well to your affections, bridle them in. Do two things,

1. Mortifie your desires.
2. Moderate your delights.

1. *Mortifie your desires.* We must not be of the Dragons temper, who (they say) is so thirsty, that no water will quench his thirst; *Mortifie therefore your inordinate affection* *; in the Greek it is ἐπιθυμίαν κακὴν, your *evil affection*; to shew that our desires when they are inordinate, are *evil*. Crucifie your desires,

* Col. 3 5.

sires, νεκρώσατε, be as dead men; a dead man hath no appetite.

Quest. How should a Christian martyr his desires? *Quest.*

Answ. 1. Get a right judgement of the things here below: They are mean, beggarly things; *Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not**? The appetite must be guided by reason; the affections are the feet of the soule, therefore they must *follow* the judgement, not *lead* it. *Answ.* * Pro. 23. 5

2. Often seriously meditate of mortality; Death will soone crop those flowers which we delight in, and pull down the fabrick of those bodies which we so garnish and beautifie. Think when you are locking up your money in your chest, who shall shortly lock you up in your coffin?

2. *Moderate your delights.* Set not your hearts too much upon any creature *. What we over-love, we shall over-grieve. *Rachel* * Ps. 62. 10.

ſet her heart too much upon her children, and when ſhee had loſt them, ſhe loſt her ſelfe too; ſuch a veine of griefe was opened as could not be ſtenched, *ſhe refuſed to be comforted.* Here was diſcontent. When we let any creature lie too neer our heart, when God pulls away that comfort a piece of our heart is rent away with it. Too much fondneſſe ends in frowardneſſe. Thoſe that would be content in the want of mercy, muſt be moderate in the enjoyment. *Jonathan* dipt the rod in honey, he did not thruſt it in. Let us take heed of ingulphing our ſelves in pleaſure; better have a ſpare diet, then by having too much, to forfeit.

SECT.

SECT. VI.

6. Rule. *Get much of heaven into your heart.*

Spiritual things ſatisfie; the more of heaven is in us, the leſſe earth will content. He that hath once taſted the love of God*, his thirſt is much quenched toward ſublunary things; the joys of Gods Spirit are heart-filling and heart-chearing joyes; he that hath theſe hath heaven begun in him, *Rom.* 14.17. and ſhall we not be content to be in heaven? Oh get a ſublime heart, *Seek the things that are above**; flie aloft in your affections, thirſt after the graces and comforts of the Spirit; the Eagle that flies above in the aire, fears not the ſtinging of the ſerpẽt; the ſerpent creeps on his belly, and ſtings onely ſuch creatures as go upon the earth.

Pſ. 63 5.

Col. 3. 1.

Diſcontent is a ſerpent that ſtings onely an earthly heart; an heavenly ſoul that with the Eagle flies aloft, finds abundantly enough in God to give contentment, and is not ſtung with the cares and diſquiets of the world.

SECT. VII.

7. Rule. *Look not ſo much on the dark ſide of your condition, as on the light.*

God doth chequer his providences, white and black as the pillar of cloud had its light ſide and dark; look on the light ſide of thy eſtate; who looks on the back ſide of a landskip? Suppoſe thou art caſt in a Law-ſuit, there is the *dark ſide*; yet thou haſt ſome land left, there is the *light ſide*. Thou haſt ſickneſs in thy body, there is the *dark ſide*; but grace in thy ſoul

ſoule, there is the *light ſide.* Thou haſt a childe taken away, there is the *dark ſide*; thy husband lives, there is the *light ſide.* Gods providences in this life are various, repreſented by thoſe ſpeckled horſes among the Myrtle-trees, which were the *red* and *white*; mercies and afflictions are inter-woven, God doth ſpeckle his work. Oh, ſaith one, I want ſuch a comfort: but weigh all thy mercies in the balance, and that will make thee content. If a man did want a finger, would he be ſo diſcontented for the loſſe of that, as not to be thankful for all the other parts and joynts of his body? Look on the *light ſide* of your condition, and then all your diſcontents will eaſily disband; do not pore upon your loſſes, but ponder upon your mercies. What? wouldſt thou have no croſſe at all? Why ſhould one man think to have all good things, when himſelfe is good but in part? wouldſt thou

*Zach. 1. 8

thou have no evil about thee, who haſt ſo much evil in thee? thou art not fully ſanctified in this life, how then thinkeſt thou to be fully ſatisfied? never look for perfection of contentment till there be perfection of grace.

SECT. VIII.

8. Rule. *Conſider in what a poſture we ſtand here in the world.*

1. We are in a *military* condition, * 2 Tim. 2. 3 we are *ſouldiers* *; now a ſouldier is content with any thing: what though he hath not his ſtately houſe, his rich furniture, his ſoft bed, his full table? yet doth not complaine; he can lie in ſtraw as well as down; he mindes not his lodging, but his thoughts run upon dividing the ſpoile, and the garland of honour that ſhall be ſet upon

upon his head; and for hope of this, is content to run any hazard, endure any hardship. Were it not absurd to hear him complaine that he wants such provision, and is faine to lie out in the fields? a Christian is a *military person*, he fights the Lords battels, he is Christs Ensigne-bearer. Now what though he endures hard fare, and the bullets flie about? he fights for a crown, and therefore must be content.

2. We are in a *peregrine condition*; Pilgrims and travellers. A man that is in a strange countrey is contented with any diet or usage, he is glad of any thing, though he hath not that respect or attendance as he looks for at home; nor is capable of the priviledges and immunities of that place, he is content; he knows when he comes into his own country he hath lands to inherit, and there he shall have honour and respect: So it is with a childe of God, he is in a pilgrim-

pilgrim-condition, *I am a ſtranger with thee, and a ſojourner, as all my fathers were* *. Therefore let a Chriſtian be content: he is *in* the world, but not *of* the world; he is borne of God, and is a Citizen of the new *Jeruſalem* *; therefore, though *he hunger and thirſt, and have no certaine dwelling place* *, yet he muſt be content; it will be better when he comes into his own countrey.

* Pſ. 39. 12

* Heb. 12. 10

* 1 Cor. 4. 11

3. We are in a *mendicant condition*; we are beggers, we beg at heaven gate, *Give us this day our daily bread*; we live upon Gods almes, therefore muſt be content with any thing; a begger muſt not pick and chooſe, he is contented with the refuſe. Oh, why doſt thou murmur that art a begger, and art fed out of the alms basket of Gods providence?

SECT.

SECT. IX.

9. Rule. *Let not your hopes depend* extrinſicè *upon theſe outward things.*

Leane not upon ſandy pillars; we oft build our comfort upon ſuch a friend or eſtate, and when that prop is removed, all our joy is gone, and our hearts begin either to *faile* or *fret*. A lame man leanes on his crutches, and if they *break* he is undone: let not thy contentment go upon crutches which may ſoon fail; the ground of contentment muſt be within thy ſelf. The word αὐτάρκεια, which is uſed for contentment, ſignifies ſelfe-ſufficiency; a Chriſtian hath that from within that is able to ſupport him; that ſtrength of faith and *good hope through grace*, as bears up his heart in the deficiency of outward

ward comforts. The Philoſophers of old, when their eſtates were gone, yet could take contentment in the goods of the minde, their learning and vertue; and ſhall not a beleever much more in the grace of the Spirit that rich enamel and embroidery of the ſoule? Say with thy ſelfe, If friends leave me, if riches take wings, yet I have that within comforts me, *viz.* an heavenly treaſure, *Omnia mea mecum porto*; when the bloſſomes of my eſtate are blown off, ſtill there is the ſap of contentment in the root of my heart, I have ſtill an intereſt in God, and that intereſt cannot be broken off. Oh never place your felicity in theſe dul and beggerly things here below.

SECT.

SECT. X.

10. Rule. *Let us often compare our condition.*

Queſt. *How ſhould I compare?* 1. *Compariſon.*

Anſw. Make this five-fold compariſon,

1. Let us compare our condition and our deſert together; if we have not what we deſire, we have more then we deſerve. For our *mercies*, we have deſerved *leſſe*; for our afflictions, we have deſerved *more*.

Firſt, in regard of our *mercies*, we have deſerved leſſe. What can we deſerve? *Can man be profitable to the Almighty?* we live upon free grace. *Alexander* gave a great gift to one of his ſubjects; the man being much taken with it, This (ſaith he) is more then I am worthy of; I do not give thee this, ſaith the King, becauſe thou art

art worthy of it, but I give a gift *like Alexander*. Whatever we have is not *merit*, but *bounty*; the leaſt bit of bread is more then God owes us; we can bring faggots to our own burning, but not one flower to the garland of our ſalvation; he that hath the leaſt mercy, will die in Gods debt.

2. Secondly, in regard of our *afflictions*, we have deſerved more. *Thou haſt puniſhed us leſſe then our iniquities deſerve* *. Is our condition ſad? we have deſerved it ſhould be worſe; hath God taken away our eſtate from us? he might have taken away Chriſt from us: hath he thrown us into priſon? he might have thrown us into hell; he might as well damne us, as whip us; this ſhould make us contented.

* Ezra. 9. 13

2. *Compariſon.*

2. Let us compare our condition with others; and this will make us content; we look at them who are above us, let us look at them who are below us*; we ſee one in his ſilks

* *Dum tibi aliena pericula memoras, mitiùs portas tua* Iſid. Soliloq. l. 1.

silks, another in his sackcloth; one hath the waters of a full cup wrung out to him, another is mingling his drink with teares; how many pale faces do we behold, whom not sickneſſe, but want hath brought into a conſumption! think of this, and be content. 'Tis worſe with them, who perhaps deſerve better then we, and are higher in Gods favour. Am I in priſon? was not *Daniel* in a worſe place, *viz.* the Lions den? Do I live in a mean cottage? look on them who are baniſhed from their houſes. We read of the primitive Saints, *that they wandered up & down in ſheeps skins and Goats skins, of whom the world was not worthy** . Haſt thou a gentle fit of an Ague? look on them who are tormented with the ſtone and gout, &c. others of Gods children have had greater afflictions, and have born them better then we. *Daniel* fed upon pulſe and drank water, yet was fairer then they who

*Heb. 11. 37.

Dan.1.15 até of the Kings portion; ſome Chriſtians who have been in a lower condition, that have fed upon pulſe and water, have looked better; *viz.* been more patient and contented then we who enjoy abundance. Do others rejoyce in affliction, and do we repine? Can they take up their Croſſe and walk chearfully under it, and do we under a lighter croſs murmur?

3. Let us compare our condition with Chriſts upon Earth; what a poor, mean condition was he pleaſed to be in for us? he was contented with any thing. *For ye know the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; that though he was rich, yet for your ſakes he be-*
*2 Cor.8. 9. *came poore**. He could have brought down an houſe from heaven with him, or challenged the high places of the earth; but he was contented to be in the *wine-preſſe*, that we might be in the *wine-cellar*; and to live poor, that we might die rich; the manger

was

was his cradle, the cobwebs his canopy; he, who is now preparing manſions for us in heaven, had none for himſelf on earth, *he had no where to lay his head.* Chriſt came in *Formâ pauperis*; who *being in the forme of God took upon him the forme of a ſervant**. We read not of any ſummes of money he had; when he wanted money, he was faine to work a miracle for it*. Jeſus Chriſt was in a low condition; he was never high, but when he was lifted up upon the Croſſe, and that was his humility; he was content to live poore, and die curſed. Oh compare your condition with Chriſts.

* Phil. 2. 7.

* Mat. 17. 27.

4. Let us compare our condition with what it was once, and this will make us content. 4. *Compariſon.*

Firſt, let us compare our *ſpiritual eſtate* with what it was once. What were we when we lay in our blood? we were heirs apparent to hel, having no right to pluck one leafe from the 1.

tree of the promiſe; it was a *Chriſtleſs* and *hopeleſſe* condition, *Epheſ.* 2. 12. but now God hath cut off the entaile of hell and damnation; he hath taken you out of the wild Olive of nature, and ingraffed you into Chriſt, making you living branches of that living Vine; he hath not only cauſed the light to ſhine *upon* you, but *into* you *, and hath intereſſed you in all the priviledges of ſonſhip; is not here that may make the ſoul content?

*Eph. 2. 12

2Cor. 4. 6.

2. Secondly, let us compare our *temporal eſtate* with what it was once: alas, we had nothing when we ſtepp'd out of the womb; *For we brought no. thing with us into the world**; if we have not that which we deſire, we have more then we did bring with us; we brought nothing with us (*but ſinne*;) other creatures bring ſomething with them into the world, the Lamb brings wool, the ſilk-worm ſilk, &c. but we brought nothing with us. What if our con-

*1 Tim. 6. 7.

dition

dition at preſent be low? it is better then it was once, therefore having food and raiment, let us be content; whatever we have, Gods providence fetcht it in to us; and if we loſe all, yet we have as much as we brought with us. This was that that made *Job* content, *Naked came I out of my mothers womb**; as if he had ſaid though God hath taken away all from me, yet why ſhould I murmur? I am as rich now as I was when I came into the world; I have as much left as I brought with me; naked came I hither; Therefore bleſſed be the Name of the Lord. * Job. 1. 21

5. Let us compare our condition with what it ſhall be ſhortly. There is a time ſhortly coming, when if we had all the riches of *India*, they would do us no good; we muſt die, and can carry nothing with us; ſo ſaith the Apoſtle, *It is certaine, we can carry nothing out of the world**; therefore it follows, *having food and raiment, let* 5. *Compariſon.* * 1 Tim. 6. 7.

Vetera frangantur sepulchra, ossa divitum agnoscas, non opes Bede.

us be therewith content, Verse 8. Open the rich mans grave, and see what is there; you may find the *Misers* bones, but not his riches: were we to live for ever here, or could we carry our riches into another world, then indeed we might be discontented when we look upon our empty bags; but it is not so: God may presently seale a warrant for death to apprehend us; and when we die we cannot carry our estate with us. Honour and riches descend not into the grave, why then are we troubled at our outward condition? why do we disguise our selves with discontent? Oh lay up a stock of grace, be rich in faith and good works these *riches will follow us**; no other coine but grace will passe currant in heaven, silver and gold will not go there; labour to *be rich towards God**? and as for other things, be not solicitous, *we shall carry nothing with us.*

* Rev. 14. 13.

* Luk. 12. 21.

SECT.

SECT. 11.

11. Rule. *Go not to bring your condition to your mind, but bring your minde to your condition.*

The way for a Chriſtian to be contented, is not by raiſing his eſtate higher, but by bringing his ſpirit lower; not by making his barnes wider, but his heart narrower*; one man a whole Lordſhip or Mannor will not content; another is ſatisfied with a few acres of land; what is the difference? the one ſtudies to ſatisfie curioſity, the other neceſſity; the one thinks what he may *have*, the other what he may *ſpare*

* *Non qui parum habet ſed qui plus cupit, pauper eſt.* Laert. Diogenes.

* *Si vis eſſe Dives (inquit Pythocles) non eſt pecunæ adjiciendū, ſed cupiditatibus detrahendū.*

* Πλέσιος γὰρ ἐκ ὁ πολλῶν χρημάτων δεόμενος, ἀλλ' ὁ μηδενὸς χρείαν ἔχων. Chryſoſt.

SECT. 12.

12. Rule. *Study the vanity of the creature.*

It matters not wherher we have more or leſſe of theſe things, they have vanity written upon the frontiſpice of them; the world is like a *ſhadow that declineth*; it is delightful, but deceitful; it promiſeth more then we finde, and it failes us when we have moſt need of it*. All the world rings changes, and is conſtant onely in its diſappointments: what then if we have leſſe of that which is at beſt but voluble and fluid? The world is as full of *mutation* as *motion*, and what if God cuts us ſhort in ſublunaries? The more a man hath to do with the world, the more he hath to do with vanity. The world may be compared to yce, which is ſmooth, but

* *O quantum eſt in rebus inane.*

but ſlippery; or to the Egyptian Temples, without very beautiful, and ſumptuous, but within nothing to be ſeen but the image of an Ape; every creature ſaith concerning ſatisfaction, *It is not in me.* The world is not a filling, but a flying comfort. 'Tis like a game at Tennis; Providence bandies her golden balls, firſt to one, then to another. Why are we diſcontented at the loſſe of theſe things, but becauſe we expect that from them which is not, and repoſe that in them, which we ought not? *Jonah was exceeding glad of the Gourd**? what a vanity was it? is it much to ſee a withering Gourd ſmitten? or to ſee the Moone dreſſing it ſelf in a new ſhape and figure?

* Jonah 4. 6. *Quid eſt omnis hujus mundi voluptas? annon virens hedera quæ textili ſylvâ per parietem inſerpit, latámque ſupra caput umbram explicuit? paravit Deus vermem & percuſſit hederam & exaruit: ita prorſus hederæ noſtræ ſubitò marceſcunt, ſimulque cum illis omne illud umbratile gaudium,* Drexel. de Æter. p. 163.

SECT.

SECT. 13.

13. Rule. *Get phancy regulated.*

It is the phancy which raiſeth the price of things above their reall worth; what is the reaſon one Tulip is worth five pounds, another perhaps not worth one ſhilling? phancy raiſeth the price; the difference is rather imaginary then reall: ſo why it ſhould be better to have thouſands then hundreds, is, becauſe men phancy it ſo; if we could phancy a lower condition better; * as having leſſe care in it, and leſſe account, it would be far more eligible; the water that ſprings out of the rock, drinks as ſweet, as if it came out of a golden chalice *; things are as we phancy them,

* *Status humilis efficax virtutis gymnaſium.* Archeſilaus. * *Dulcis proſiliens aqua ſive è Petra fluens, ſive in poculo, ſive ex mandibulo aſini, ad reſtringuendam ſitim ſufficit. Panis ſubcinericius, mel agreſte poſſunt te fortem reddere æquè ac cibus ſplendidiſſimus.* Hyperius.

them. Ever ſince the fall, the fancy is diſtempered; *God ſaw that the imagination of the thoughts of his heart were evill**. Phancy looks through wrong ſpectacles; pray that God will ſanctifie your phancy; a lower condition would content, if the mind and phancy were ſet right. *Diogenes* preferred his Cynicall life before *Alexanders* royalty; he phancied his little cloyſter beſt. *Fabricius* a poor man, yet deſpiſed the gold of King *Pyrrhus*.

*Gen. 6 5.

——— *Contentus honeſto*
Fabricius parvo ſpernebat munera regum,
Sudabatque gravi Conſul Serranus aratro. Claud. l. 1.

Could we cure a diſtempered phancy, we might ſoone conquer a diſcontented heart.

SECT.

SECT. 14.

14. Rule, *Consider how little will suffice nature.*

The body is but of small continent, and is easily recruited. Christ hath taught us to pray *for our daily bread*; *Parva seges satis est*, nature is content with a little; μὴ διψᾶν. μὴ πεινᾶν, not to thirst, not to starve is enough, saith *Gregory Nazianzen*; meat and drink is a Christians riches, saith St. *Hierome**; and the Apostle saith, *Having food and raiment, let us be content.*

* *Cibus & potus sunt divitiæ Christianorum.*

——— *O prodigia rerum,*
Luxuries, nunquam parvo contenta paratu,
Et quæsitorum pelago, terraq; ciborum
Ambitiosa Fames, & lanta gloria mensæ!
Discite quàm parvo liceat producere vitam, Et

Et quantum natura petat ——

Lucan. l 4. *Pharſal.*

The ſtomack is ſooner fill'd then the eye; How quickly would a man be content, if he would ſtudy rather to ſatisfie his *hunger* then his *humour?*

SECT. 15.

15. Rule. *Beleeve the preſent condition is beſt for us.*

Fleſh and blood is not a competent judge. Surfeited ſtomacks are for banquetting ſtuff; but a man that regards his health, is rather for ſolid food. Vaine men fancy ſuch a condition beſt, and would flouriſh in their bravery; whereas a wiſe Chriſtian hath his will melted into Gods will, and thinks it beſt to be at his finding; God is wiſe, he knowes whether we need food, or phyſick; and if we could acquieſce in

in providence the quarrel would soon be at an end. O, what a ſtrang creature would man be, if he were what he could wiſh himſelf? Be content to be at Gods allowance, God knowes which is the fitteſt paſture to put his ſheep in; Sometimes a more barren ground doth well, whereas rank paſture may rot. Do I meet with ſuch a croſſe? God ſhewes me what the world is; he hath no better way to weane me, then by putting me to a ſtep-mother. Doth God ſtint me in my allowance? he is now dieting me. Do I meet with loſſes? it is, that God may keep *me* from being loſt. Every croſſe-wind ſhall at laſt blow me to the right port. Did we beleive that condition beſt which God doth parcel out to us, we ſhould chearfully ſubmit and ſay; *The lines are fallen in pleaſant places*

SECT.

SECT. 16.

16 Rule. *Doe not too much indulge the fleſh.*

We have taken an oath in Baptiſme to *forſake the fleſh.* The fleſh is a worſe enemy then the devil; it is *a boſome traitour*: an enemy within is worſt. If there were no devil to tempt, the fleſh would be another *Eve* to tempt to the *forbidden fruit.* Oh take heed of giving way to it; whence is al our diſcontent, but from the fleſhly part? The fleſh puts us upon the immoderate purſuit of the world; it conſults for eaſe and plenty; and if it be not ſatisfied, then diſcontents begin to ariſe. Oh, let it not have the reines, martyr the fleſh; in ſpiritual things the fleſh is a *ſluggard*, in ſecular things an *Horſleech*, crying, Give, give. The fleſh is an enemy

enemy to ſuffering *, it will ſooner make a man a *Courtier* then a *Martyr*. Oh keep it under, put its neck under Chriſts yoke, ſtretch and naile it to his Croſſe; never let a Chriſtian look for *contentment* in his ſpirit, till there be *confinement* in his fleſh.

* *Non durum eſt quod patimur, ſed molles ſumus.* Senec.

SECT. 17.

17. Rule. *Meditate much on the glory which ſhall be revealed.*

There are great things laid up in heaven: Though it be ſad for the preſent, yet let us be content in that it will ſhortly be better, it is but a while, and we ſhall be with Chriſt, bathing our ſouls in the fountaine of his love; we ſhall never complain of wants or injuries any more; our croſſe may be heavie, but one ſight of Chriſt will make us forget all our former ſorrowes. There are two things ſhould give contentment;

1. That God will make us able to bear

bear our troubles*. God, (ſaith *Chryſoſtome*) doth like a Luteniſt, who will not let the ſtrings of his Lute be too ſlack, leſt it ſpoile the muſick; nor will he ſuffer them to be too hard ſtretched, or ſcrued up, leſt they break: So doth God deal with us, he will not let us have too much proſperity, leſt this ſpoile the muſick of prayer and repentance; nor yet too much adverſity, leſt the ſpirit *faile before him*, and the ſouls *which he hath made**.

* 1 Cor. 10. 13. *Chryſoſt.*

* Iſa. 57. 16

2. When we have ſuffered *a while**, we ſhall be perfected in glory; the Croſſe ſhall be our ladder by which we ſhall climb up to heaven. Be then content, and the ſcene will alter. God will ere long turn our water into wine; the hope of this is enough to drive away all diſtempers from *the heart*. Bleſſed be God, it will be better: *We have no continuing city here**, therefore our afflictions cannot continue. A wiſe man looks ſtill to

* 1 Pet. 5. 10

* Heb. 13.

the end: *The end of the just man is peace**. Me thinks the ſmoothneſſe of the end ſhould make amends for the ruggednesſe of the way. O eternity, eternity! think often of the *Kingdome prepared*. *David* was advanced from the field to the Throne. Firſt he held his *Shepherds ſtaffe*, and ſhortly after, the *Royal Scepter*. Gods people may be put to hard ſervices here; but God hath choſen them to be *Kings* to ſit upon the throne with the Lord Jeſus. This being weighed in the balance of Faith, would be an excellent means to bring the heart to contentment.

* Pſal. 37. 37

SECT. XVIII.

18. Rule. *Be much in prayer.*

The laſt Rule for Contentment is, *Be much in prayer*. Beg of God, that he wil work our hearts to this bleſſed frame; *Is any man afflicted? let him pray**: So, is any man diſcontented? let

* Jam. 5. 13

let him pray, Prayer gives vent. The opening of a veine, lets out the bad blood: When the heart is filled with sorrow and disquiet, prayer lets out the bad blood. The key of prayer oyled with teares*, unlocks the heart of all its discontents. Prayer is an holy spell or charme to drive away trouble; Prayer is the unbosoming of the soule, the unloading of all our cares in Gods breast, and this ushers in sweet contentment. When there is any burden upon our spirits, by opening our mind to a friend, we finde our hearts finely eased and quieted. It is not our *strong resolutions*, but our *strong requests* to God which must give the heart ease in trouble; by Prayer the strength of Christ is brought into the soule; and where that is, a man is able to go through any condition. *Paul* could be in every state content: but that you may not think he was able to do this of himself; he tells you, that though

* *Expletur lachrymis, egeritúrq; dolor.*

he could want and abound, and πάντα ποιεῖν, *do all things* *; yet it was *through Christ strengthening him*, Phil. 4. 13. 'Tis the childe that writes, but it is the Scrivener guides his hand. St. *Paul* arrived at the hardest duty in Religion, *viz. Contentment*; but the Spirit was his *Pilot*, and Christ his *strength*, and this strength was ushered in by holy payer. Prayer is a powerful Oratour. Prayer is an *exorist* with God, and an *exorcist* against sin. The best way is to pray down discontent. What *Luther* saith of *concupiscence*, I may say of *Discontent*; prayer is a sacred Leech * to suck out the venome, and swelling of this passion. Prayer composeth the heart, and brings it into tune. Hath God deprived you of many comforts? blesse God that he left you the Spirit of Prayer. *Use 6.*

* Ἀλλ' ἐπειδὴ μεγαλη-γορίᾳ τὸ πρᾶγμα ἦν· ὅρα πῶς ἐπιλαμβάνεται, ταχέως πάντα ἰσχύω ἐν τῷ ἐνδυναμοῦντι μὲ Χριστῷ. οὐκ ἐμὸν τὸ κατόρθωμα, ἀλλὰ τοῦ τὴν ἴσχυν δεδωκότος ἐστίν. Chrysost.

* *Oratio est hirudo animæ.*

Use 6. The laſt uſe is of comfort, or an encouraging word to the contented Chriſtian. If there be an heaven upon earth, thou haſt it. O Chriſtian, thou may'ſt inſult over thy troubles, and with the *Leviathan* laugh at the ſhaking of a ſpear, *Job* 41. 29. What ſhall I ſay? thou art a crown to thy profeſſion; thou doſt hold it out to all the world, that there's vertue enough in Religion to give the ſoule contentment. Thou ſheweſt height of grace. When grace is *crowning*, it is not ſo much for us to be content; but when grace is *conflicting*, and meets with croſſes, tentations, agonies; now to be content, this is a glorious thing indeed. *Use* VI. *Conſolation* Job 41.29.

To a contented Chriſtian, I ſhall ſay two things for a farewel.

Firſt, God is exceedingly taken with ſuch a frame of heart. God ſaith of a contented Chriſtian, as *David* once ſaid of *Goliahs* ſword, *There is*

none like that, give it me, 1 Sam. 21. 9. If you would pleaſe God, and be *men of his heart*, be contented. It is ſaid that *Rebecca* made *Iſaac* ſavoury meate ſuch as her husband loved; would ye give God *ſuch a diſh as he loves?* bring him this of Contentment. The Muſician hath many leſſons to play, but he hath one above all the reſt: There are many leſſons of holy Muſick that delight God; the leſſon of repentance, humility, &c. But this leſſon of Contentment is the ſweeteſt leſſon that a Beleever can play. God hates a froward ſpirit.

Secondly, the contented Chriſtian ſhall be no loſer. What loſt *Job* by his patience? God gave him three times as much as he had before. What loſt *Abram* by his contentment? he was content to leave his Countrey at Gods call; the Lord makes a Covenant with him, that he would be *his God*, Gen. 17. He changeth

changeth his name; no more *Abram*, but *Abraham* the Father of many Nations. God makes his ſeed as the Starres of heaven; nay, honours him with this title, *The Father of the faithful.* Gen. 18. 17 The Lord makes known his ſecrets to him, *Shall I hide from* Abraham *the thing that I will do?* God ſettles a rich inheritance upon him, that land which was a type of heaven, and afterwards tranſlated him into the bleſſed Paradiſe. God will be ſure to reward the contented Chriſtian. As our Saviour ſaid in another caſe to *Nathanael*, *Becauſe I ſaid I ſaw thee under the fig-tree, beleeveſt thou? thou ſhalt ſee greater things then theſe.* John 1. 50. So, I ſay, Art thou contented (O Chriſtian) with a little? thou ſhalt ſee greater things then theſe; God will diſtill the ſweet influences of his love into thy ſoule: He will raiſe thee up friends; he will bleſſe the oyle in the cruſe; and when that is

done, he will crowne thee with an eternal enjoyment of himſelfe; he will give thee Heaven, where thou ſhalt have as much contentment as thy ſoule can poſſibly thirſt after.

FINIS.

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FINIS.

Divine Contentment

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